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ABSTRACT

Based on observations of hundreds of school-age child care programs across the nation and conversations with parents, children, and professionals in school-age care, this training guide is intended to help parents, caregivers, and interested citizens to develop quality school-age programs in their communities. The guide begins by summarizing an instructional video which features a step-by-step approach to using the four keys to a quality program: (1) planning with school-age children in mind; (2) organizing for diversity and choice; (3) viewing parents as partners with programs; and (4) collaborating with others who can help. Uses of this video are also outlined. The guide then discusses common challenges for school-age programs. The next two sections of the guide contain trainer notes on workshops for parent and community groups, including a checklist for determining how well a program meets the four keys, and on workshops for school age professionals. Four training modules for these workshops, with exercises, are then presented, based on the four keys to success. The remainder of the document contains supplementary readings and worksheets of relevance to school-age programs on such topics as programming for older children, problem solving, and keeping parents informed. (HTH)

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Trainer's Guide

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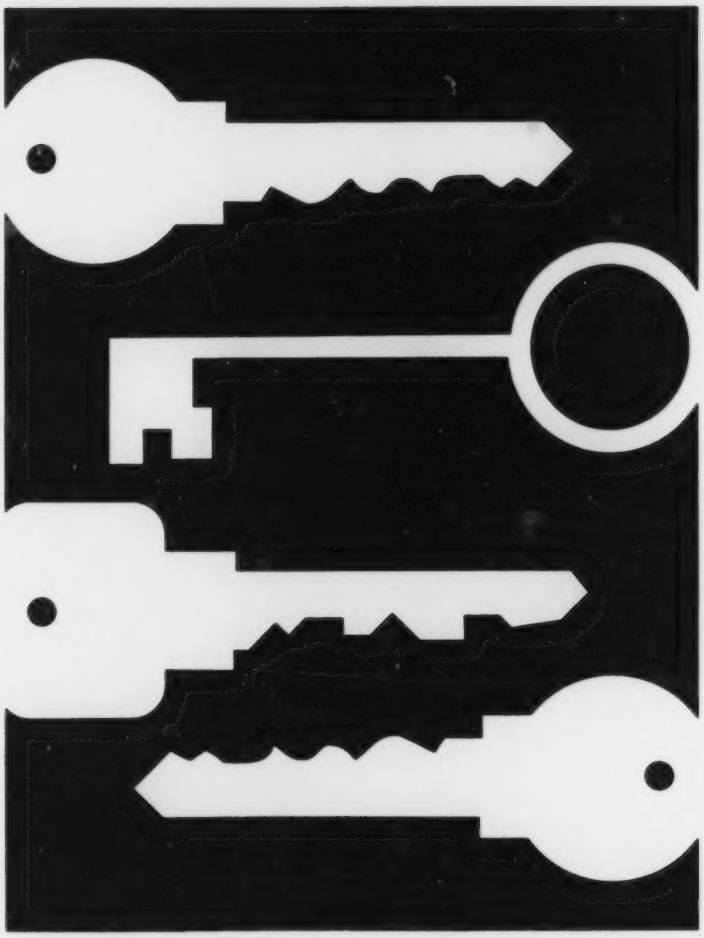

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Trainer's Guide
to Using the Video and Viewer's Guides
Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care

Roberta L. Newman

Developed with funding from
Child Care Connection, Inc.
Wilmington, Delaware

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Dedication

This **Trainer's Guide** is dedicated to my son Clayton who taught me how important it is to listen to children, to fellow parents who want their children to feel safe, secure, happy, and valued as an individual in child care settings, and to fellow school-age professionals who dedicate themselves every day to bringing out the best in each child they serve.

Introduction

The availability of out of school programs for school-age children is steadily increasing in communities across the nation. Many different groups and organizations are involved in the development and operation of programs--public and independent schools, recreation agencies, religious organizations, youth agencies, child care centers, parent groups, and many others. Programs are housed in a wide variety of settings. Some have their own dedicated space. But very often school-age programs are housed in space which is used by other groups for a portion of the day such as cafeterias and gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, or school classrooms. The types of activities offered by programs is varied. Depending on the philosophy and purpose of the sponsoring agency, programs may emphasize sports and outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, enrichment activities, special clubs and hobby groups, homework and tutorial help, field trips and special visitors, community involvement, or some combination of all of these.

One of the reasons for the diversity among school-age programs is that no single organization or group is solely responsible for developing and operating these programs. Another reason for the diversity among programs relates to the fact that staff in these programs come from many different fields and have received different levels and types of training. For example, programs might be staffed by caregivers with college or associate degrees in recreation, education, child development, or psychology. Or they might be staffed by caregivers who have not received additional training or education beyond high school. Still another reason for the diversity of programs is that they tend to reflect the characteristics, values, interests, and available resources of local communities.

The wealth of diversity in school-age child care provides us with a rich source of program models as we develop new programs and work to improve existing ones. However, this diversity can also be frustrating to parents and others who want to know how to recognize and build on elements of quality in school-age programs. Parents, program developers, caregivers, and others in the community often ask questions such as:

* Are there common characteristics of quality in school-age programs, regardless of where they are housed or who operates them?

* What kind of space is most suitable for school-age programs?

* What kinds of activities should be available to children in school-age programs? Should children do homework in these programs?

* What kinds of equipment and supplies should be available?

* How much freedom, choice, and independence should children have in school-age programs? How much structure do school-age children need during leisure hours? How much time should children spend in group games or adult-directed activities?

* Who should be the leaders, teachers, or caregivers in programs for school-age children? What is their role? What kind of training and preparation do they need?

* What can be done to get older elementary school children more interested in attending school-age programs?

* What is the role of parents in school-age programs?

* How can school-age programs help children develop relationships with peers and others in their communities?

The video **Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care** and companion viewer's guides are intended to provide a framework which can be used to help parents, program developers, and caregivers to answer these and other important questions about quality programming for school-age children. The four **Keys to Quality** presented in the video and viewer's guides grew out of the producer's observations of hundreds of school-age programs across the nation and conversations with parents, children, and school-age professionals representing a wide variety of out of school programs. The goal of this training program is to help parents, professionals, and interested citizens unlock the doors to quality school-age programs in their communities.

Video Program Summary

The video features a practical, step by step approach to understanding and using **four keys to quality** to unlock the doors to quality programs:

Key #1: Planning with School-Age Children in Mind

Key #2: Organizing for Diversity and Choice

Key #3: Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs

Key #4: Collaborating with Others Who Can Help

Regardless of where they are housed or who is responsible for their operation, quality programs address issues related to these four keys.

Introductory Segment

The video opens with a series of live scenes from several school-age programs housed in different types of space. The scenes show us school-age environments that are:

* safe and secure;
* warm, caring, and nurturing;
* interesting, varied, creative, stimulating, and fun;
* well-organized;
* comfortable and attractive;
* flexible, friendly, and relaxed;
* balanced with opportunities for freedom and structure, choice and direction, privacy and companionship;
* staffed with people who encourage, guide, and support children's individual growth and development.

This segment ends with the narrator introducing us to the four keys to quality in school-age child care.

Key #1: Planning with School-Age Children in Mind

This segment emphasizes the importance of planning programs based on the needs and characteristics of school-age children. It opens with a series of comments from school-age children who talk about their favorite things to do out of school and what they like best about their centers. This is followed by an interview with a parent who stresses how much she likes the program because it is geared to the interests and needs of the children. She tells us she especially likes the fact that the children are involved in planning what goes on at the center and that her own child (who is ten years old) really enjoys participating in special clubs.

In the next section, we see children working and playing on their own and in small groups. They are exploring center environments which encourage their curiosity and imagination and allow them to be busy collecting, inventing, and investigating. They are also shown participating in activities that allow them to develop skills and interests that are useful in the "real world". This helps them feel successful, responsible, accepted, and confident. The narrator points out that quality programs offer a flexible, interesting environment which promotes exploration and growing independence. Because school-age children need lots of opportunities to exercise and use their changing bodies, this section closes with scenes which show children "on the move" participating in a variety of physical activities.

One of the most important things to keep in mind about the needs of school-age children is that the school day is equivalent to the child's work day. During school, children spend lots of time in a structured setting, completing tasks and assignments, following directions, and learning new skills. Although most school-age children need some time to do homework after school, they also need time to relax, unwind and be themselves. In this portion of video, we see children participating in a wide range of leisure-time activities. Some are shown enjoying quiet time alone or relaxing with friends; others are unwinding after the school day by engaging in vigorous physical activities and games. The segment on **Key #1** ends with the narrator telling us that quality programs offer a wide range of activities to **complement** the school day, recognizing there should be a **qualitative** difference between out of school time and in school time.

Key #2: Organizing for Diversity and Choice

The video introduces **Key #2** by stating that quality programs are well-organized. The narrator highlights the importance of organizing programs in a way that both supports the characteristic needs of school-age children and respects individual differences among them.

The first program component that needs to be well-organized is **Space.** The way environments look have a strong affect on people. The viewer is shown scenes of an empty cafeteria and classroom and is asked to consider how it would feel to spend every morning or afternoon in empty spaces like these. It can be challenging to operate quality programs in areas which must be set up and taken down every day. Yet, with creativity and cooperation it can be done. In the next scenes we see staff and children working together to transform a cafeteria and stage area into a functional, attractive, comfortable environment for a school-age program. The narrator notes that by helping shape and set up their environment each day, these school-age children are learning to be resourceful and responsible.

In the next section, we see children using a variety of equipment and supplies in a program which shares space and one which has exclusive use of a center room. The children use special areas for table toys, board and card games, science, dramatic play, large muscle activities, music and dance, reading and homework, building, and arts and crafts. The next scenes show that space is set up to allow many activities to take place at once and that traffic patterns are designed to help children get from place to place without disrupting each other. We see that areas which are naturally noisy are separated from quiet areas. Special areas are reserved for clubs, storage of long term projects, and indoor sports and games. The space in these programs is organized so that both group and individual activities can take place at the same time. And a "homey" feeling is created by using large pillows, bean bags, rocking chairs, throw rugs, or carpet squares.

The narrator closes this section by emphasizing that quality programs make the best use of available space by going through five organizational steps which are presented as a graphic:

1. They analyze the space--it's possibilities and problems.
2. They select appropriate equipment and supplies.
3. They design "interest areas".
4. They create a comfortable atmosphere.
5. They involve children in shaping their environment.

The second program component that needs to be well-organized to ensure quality is **Staff.** The narrator opens this section by observing that the quality of the staff often determines the quality of the program. This statement is followed by scenes of caregivers who are comfortable in many roles--being a leader, a listener, a participant, a monitor and observer, a mediator and problem solver, a guide, and an adult friend. The final scene in this section shows a program leader meeting with children about the kinds of things they would like to do at the center. This scene highlights the importance of listening and talking with children, getting involved in their activities without interfering, treating children with respect, and giving children support and encouragement as they work to become more independent.

In the next section, we listen to interviews with several caregivers and program directors as we watch them in action with the children. They discuss their views of what school-age children need staff to provide for them--safety, lots of planned "fun" activities, understanding, affection, individualized attention and interest in what they are doing, a relaxed atmosphere, help in establishing a spirit of togetherness, positive role models, and a sense of security.

Following the interviews, the narrator indicates that staff in quality programs know how to plan a schedule that works for school-age children. We see a graphic which identifies the **Characteristics of Schedules in Quality Programs:**

* They are paced to meet the varying needs of the children.
* They balance time for quiet and active periods.
* They allow for changes in plans.
* They allow for simultaneous diverse activities.
* They allow for smooth transitions.

This segment on **Key #2** closes with another graphic which summarizes the **Qualities of Staff Who Provide Flexible Programs** which support diversity and choice:

1. They are good at playing many different roles and are well-organized.
2. They listen and talk with children.
3. They adjust to changes in children's needs and interests.
4. They treat children with respect.
5. They help each child grow towards independence.
6. They like to share interests and skills with children.

Key #3: Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs

This segment of the video opens with scenes of parents interacting with their children and center staff. While we watch these scenes, the narrator introduces the idea that quality programs recognize they must serve parents well if they want to succeed with children. In addition, the narrator observes that staff in quality programs understand that parents are the most important people in children's lives and that they have different values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, and needs. In addition, staff in quality programs work hard to understand and support parental stresses, pressures, concerns, hopes and dreams for their children.

Following this introduction, three parents comment on ways they like to be involved with their children's school-age program. One parent talks about how she got together with the staff and planned a Mardi Gras party for all the children. She says she appreciated the staff's interest in this project because her family is from Louisiana and she wants her children to know about the traditions. Another parent comments that she really appreciates the open communication at her center and the fact that staff respond to parent's questions and concerns. A father mentions the opportunities for parents to participate in organizing and helping with field trips and hobby clubs.

The parent comments are followed by more scenes of parents at the center while the narrator suggests additional ways for parents to be involved--participating on an advisory board, attending a performance by the children, contributing volunteer time, sharing special talents or resource materials for center activities.

The segment on **Key #3** concludes with a graphic which summarizes **Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs.** The graphic lists four components:

1. **Accepting** parents as the most important people in children's lives.
2. **Assessing** the various needs of parents.
3. **Accommodating** parent's needs to be involved in different ways.
4. Developing an **Alliance** with parents as resourceful partners.

Key #4: Collaborating with Others Who Can Help

As the segment of the video devoted to **Key #4** opens, we see a variety of individuals and organizations who have resources that could benefit and enrich school-age programs. We also see examples of the kinds of organizations who often work together to sponsor programs through contractual agreements--schools, P.T.A.'s, churches, and youth and community agencies. During these scenes, the narrator discusses the importance of open, direct communication and cooperation among all those involved.

After the opening section, we hear an interview with an elementary school principal who underscores the importance of school support for school-age programs housed in elementary school buildings. She describes the school-age program at her school as a valuable resource to children, parents, and school staff. Because of this, she states her strong commitment to doing whatever is necessary to help it be successful. In closing, she states: "Day care is a national issue. We have to insure that children have quality day care."

The final segment of **Key #4** gives us a look at ways programs can work with others to ensure that children connect with community resources such as museums, recreation centers, businesses, libraries, and people with interesting talents and skills to share.

Conclusion

The concluding segment of the video shows scenes of parents and children leaving their centers at the end of the day. The narrator then reviews a graphic of the four keys to quality and urges parents and community groups to remember them when selecting and developing school-age child care programs. The video concludes with a series of portraits of children's faces--faces of children who are happily and productively engaged in quality school-age programs.

Uses of the Video

Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care can be used with a number of different audiences: parents, program developers and administrators, group leaders and caregivers, school personnel, child care advocates, and other concerned citizens. By sharing the video program with many different individuals, groups, and organizations, you can help your community build common understandings and come together with a unified commitment to plan, develop, and support quality school-age programs. Here are some of the ways the video can be used:

* to help parents recognize and select quality school-age care for their children.

* to heighten awareness and stimulate interest in the need for starting or improving programs in your community.

* to enlist support and cooperation from schools or other organizations that might provide facilities for programs.

* to provide a basis for training school-age program developers, program leaders, or caregivers.

As a trainer, remember that each audience will approach the video from a perspective which may be unique to members of the group. Before showing the video to any audience, prepare yourself by thinking through questions such as:

* Who are the members of the viewing audience?

  - What perspectives--beliefs, values, opinions, knowledge, concerns--might be common to members of this audience? On what issues might they have differing perspectives?

  - How might their perspectives influence their response to the video?

* What is the purpose of showing the video to this audience?

* What kind of format should you use for your presentation?

  - When and where should the presentation be held? How long should it last? (Should it be presented as part of a one-time informational meeting? Should it be used to launch a series of training sessions?)

  - How should you publicize the presentation?

  - How should you introduce the video to the audience? After showing the video in its entirety, should you show certain sections again for a more in-depth look?

  - What kinds of questions should you pose to facilitate discussion and audience reaction to the video?

  - What kinds of questions and concerns should you anticipate from the audience?

  - Which video guide should be used to complement the presentation for this audience? (see next section)

  - How will you know whether the presentation was successful?

* What kind of follow-up will be needed if you want the video to have a lasting impact?

When the video is used to heighten awareness, to provide general information, or to enlist cooperation and support, you will probably show it once in its entirety. This approach would be useful when sharing the video with audiences such as P.T.A. and other parent groups; employer seminars; or presentations for civic groups, school staff, or other community organizations. Additional suggestions for using the video for these kinds of audiences are presented in the section titled **Trainer Notes: Workshops for Parent and Community Groups.**

When the video is used to train program developers, program leaders, or caregivers, you might use the video in several different ways. For example, it can be used in its entirety as an introduction to a set of training sections. Because the video is clearly divided into sections, you can also take a closer look at separate segments as trainees explore each of the four **Keys to Quality.** Instructions for using the video and **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** for training sessions are presented in the section titled: **Trainer Notes: Workshops for School-Age Professionals.**

Uses of the Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals

Although the video can stand on its own as an introduction to quality school-age child care for school-age professionals, it can be enhanced by using it with the **Viewer's Guide** as a basis for special workshops, seminars, and on going training sessions.

The comprehensive **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** includes an Introduction to the Training Program, a Video Program Summary, four Training Modules, and a series of Supplementary Readings and Worksheets to support ongoing professional development once group training is completed. Each Training Module contains a series of exercises directly related to one of the **Keys to Quality.** Trainers can adapt these exercises for use with school-age professionals who play a variety of roles in programs: planners, directors, supervisors, and caregivers. The **Viewer's Guide** is presented in a format which lends itself to group training in a workshop setting. However, sufficient time for completing all the exercises in group training sessions may not be available. In view of this, the guide contains suggestions to help school-age professionals complete many of the exercises and activities on their own or in a partnership arrangement with a mentor, co-worker, or supervisor.

Detailed instructions for using the **Viewer's Guide** to conduct workshops, seminars, and training sessions for school-age professionals are presented in this **Trainer's Guide.**

Common Challenges for School-Age Programs

School-age programs across the country face many of the same challenges as they work to start, develop, and improve services for school-age children. The video **Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care** and the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** address a number of these common concerns. Here are a few examples:

* **How to use available space effectively.** Approximately 50% of school-age programs across the nation are housed in space that may be used by someone else for a portion of the day--gymnasiums, cafeterias, and multi-purpose rooms in schools, churches, or other buildings in the community. Programs housed in these facilities must usually be set up and taken down on a daily basis. School-age professionals who operate programs in shared space are constantly on the lookout for creative, practical ways to create interesting, enriching, and attractive environments for children in these settings. Storage of equipment and supplies, access to water and kitchen facilities, and how to create a homey feeling in a wide open large room are examples of some of the problems faced by programs in shared space. **Module Two** of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** contains exercises designed to help programs make the most effective use of available space.

* **How to identify, recruit, and retain the right people to work with children in out of school programs.** Turnover in school-age and other child care programs is often high. Quality programs are constantly searching for staff who are energetic, flexible, knowledgeable about the developmental needs of school-age children, and genuinely enjoy sharing interests, talents, and skills with school-age children. Some programs develop innovative strategies to supplement their core staff. College students--both male and female--work as assistants, aides, and substitutes in many programs. In some areas, agencies on aging train interested senior citizens to work part-time in school-age programs. Some school-age programs have successfully used high school volunteers who are participating in high school child

development classes. **Module Two** of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** includes learning projects and activities designed to help staff be more effective, resourceful caregivers. **Module Four** contains exercises designed to help participants identify individuals in their communities who might be willing to share skills, talents, hobbies, and companionship with school-age children.

* **How to Get Parents More Involved in School-Age Programs.** Today's parents are often stressed, over-extended, and torn between family and work concerns. Sometimes, caregivers associate parental lack of participation with lack of interest and concern for their children. But when we take a step back and look at the situation, often the lack of parent participation can be corrected by recognizing that parents, like children, have varying interests, needs, concerns, knowledge, and values. Parents need different options for ways to be involved; all parents won't want to be involved in the same way. This is especially important in communities where there is great diversity among parents with respect to lifestyle, occupation, education, cultural traditions, economic resources, travel time and distance commuting to work and/or child care, and many other factors that can influence a parent's ability to be involved in their child's life in a school-age program. **Module Three** of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** contains exercises designed to help participants develop workable strategies for increasing the level of parent involvement in programs.

* **How to Help Children Build Relationships with Peers and Others in the Community.** One of the characteristics of school-age children is that they need to find ways to explore the world beyond their home and family. They are interested in developing relationships with peers at school, at the child care center, and in their community. They are also interested in getting to know adults who have special skills, knowledge, and talents to share. Once they learn more about the broader community, school-age children like to get involved by helping with community projects and solving community problems that concern them. School-age children are also interested in learning more about people who live in environments which are different from their own. For example, children in urban and rural settings enjoy getting to know each other and sharing their different life experiences. Because school-age children are capable of thinking about people and places beyond their immediate surroundings, they are curious about how children learn, work, and play in other communities and in other countries.

There is a great deal of racial, cultural, and economic diversity in America. However, school-age child care program leaders have observed that often children from different backgrounds know very little about each other. Sometimes, the school-age program becomes the first real meeting ground for children from different backgrounds. This means that school-age professionals have an important role to play in helping children expand their horizons--to learn to understand, accept, and value differences among each other. **Module Four of the Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** contains exercises for helping children in programs understand each other and connect with their communities. It also contains suggestions for helping children get involved in community, national, and global projects geared to the interests of school-age children.

As indicated by the above examples, exercises in the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** are designed to help participants apply the ideas to the real world of school-age programs. As you conduct workshops for school-age professionals, be sure to take advantage of opportunities to focus participants on the uniqueness of different programs as well as the characteristics, issues, and concerns which may be common among programs. While participants may come from programs which are sponsored by different kinds of groups--private or public schools, churches, youth agencies, and other organizations--training sessions are an opportunity to help participants share and solve common problems and develop ongoing connections which will enrich programs for all school-age children.

Trainer Notes:

Presentations for Parents

and Community Groups

Introduction

The **Keys to Quality** video can be used in a variety of situations to introduce parents and community members to the components of quality child care for school-age children. Here are a few examples:

* It can be used as a **planning tool** by citizens and parent groups involved in developing community school-age child care initiatives.

* It can be used by policy-makers as a **backdrop** for **evaluating** the extent to which existing programs are addressing the needs of school-age children and families.

* It can be used as an **advocacy tool** to enlist the support of key community players in securing adequate facilities, a diversity of equipment and supplies, professional staff, frequent field trips, etc.

* It can be used by individual parents as a **selection tool** as they search for a program that matches their children's needs. Trainers might arrange to present the video at a P.T.A. meeting or as part of employer sponsored seminars for parents.

* It can be used as an **orientation tool** to help school-administrators and other facility managers understand how **out of school** programs differ from **in school** programs for school-agers.

* It can be used as a **decision-making tool** by school staff or other community organizations who are in the process of selecting a school-age program "vendor" to provide contracted services in their facilities.

* It can be used as a **public relations tool** to increase the community's awareness of the need for quality school-age child care. For example, trainers might arrange to have the video shown on a local Cable TV station and follow the showing with a discussion of quality care by a panel of local "experts" and/or parents.

* It can be used by school-age programs as a **parent education tool** to help parents learn more about the program's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

As a trainer, you will want to tailor your presentation of the video to fit each situation. To do this effectively, focus on your purpose in showing the video, the time available, and the needs of the group. For example:

* To introduce the concept of quality care to a P.T.A. group unfamiliar with school-age programs, you might begin by showing the video in its entirety and follow up with a general discussion of parent reactions, questions, and comments.

* To use the video as the basis for program planning, you might show the video in segments featuring each of the four **Keys to Quality**. After viewing each segment, community program planning implications could be discussed and developed in break-out groups.

* To use the video as an advocacy tool to enlist financial or other support, you might arrange a special meeting with key players, showing the video in its entirety or selecting specific segments to share. Your decision of what to show would depend on the amount of time available, and your specific concerns. Sufficient time should be allowed for follow up discussion.

When giving presentations to parent and community groups, you may wish to provide participants with a handout at the end of the presentation. A checklist of questions related to the **Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care** was developed for this purpose. The checklist appears at the end of this section and may be reprinted for use with parent and community group presentations. (Note: This checklist does not address basic health and safety concerns which may or may not be reflected in state or local regulations for school-age child care. Because studies have shown that child care programs often fall short of protecting children's safety and well-being, you will want to stress how important it is for communities to be aware of and concerned

about these issues. A supplementary checklist for helping parents and others become aware of the warning signs of poor child care is available from the Child Care Action Campaign and is titled **"Finding Good Child Care: The Essential Questions to Ask When Seeking Quality Care for Your Child."**[1] While this checklist is not specific to school-age child care, it does include important questions safety, health and nutrition, and management policies which apply to all child care programs.)

[1]**"Finding Good Child Care: The Essential Questions to Ask When Seeking Quality Care for Your Child"** (1994) Child Care Action Campaign Information Guide 19. Available from Child Care Action Campaign, 330 Seventh Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care

A Checklist of Questions for Parents and Community Groups

(Permission is granted to reprint this Checklist for Use with **"Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care"** video presentations to parent and community groups)

Key #1: Is the Program Planned with the Needs of School-Age Children in Mind?

Yes	No		
___	___	1.	Does the program recognize the school-age child's growing need for independence and provide appropriate guidance and support to meet this need?
___	___	2.	Does the program provide opportunities for children to explore the world around them--opportunities to investigate, invent, collect, be industrious and curious?
___	___	3.	Does the program provide opportunities for self-expression and creativity?
___	___	4.	Does the program understand the school-age child's need to be good at doing things that are useful and appreciated in the "real world?" Are there opportunities for children to master new skills, develop talents, and expand their interests?
___	___	5.	Does the program provide lots of opportunities for children to exercise and become comfortable with their bodies as they grow and change?
___	___	6.	Does the program recognize that there should be a qualitative difference between out of school time and in school time? Are there opportunities for children to relax, unwind, be themselves, and socialize with friends?
___	___	7.	Does the program recognize that school-age children have a growing interest in the world beyond home, family, and school? Are there opportunities for children to go on field trips? Are there opportunities for children to meet and talk with members of the community with interesting talents and skills to share?

Key #2: Is the Program Organized for Diversity and Choice in an Effort to Meet the Varying Needs of Individual Children?

Yes	No	
___	___	8. **Space.** Is care and attention given to creating an interesting, inviting environment whether it is housed in space that is shared or in space used by no one else?
___	___	a. Is the program well-stocked with appropriate equipment and supplies?
___	___	b. Does the program use soft items like pillows, bean bag chairs and carpeting to create a comfortable, "homey" feeling in some areas?
___	___	c. Does the program establish interest areas which encourage children to work and play on their own--interest areas like arts and crafts, board and table games, science, dramatic play, music and dance, large muscle activities, reading and homework, building and woodworking, etc.?
___	___	d. Does the program involve children in shaping the environment? Does it provide opportunities for children to make suggestions about the kinds of equipment and supplies they would like to have, the kinds of activities they would like to do, and the way they would like to have the environment decorated and arranged?
___	___	9. **Staffing.** Is the program dedicated to finding the right people for the job?
___	___	a. Are caregivers well-trained and prepared for the job? Are they knowledgeable about the out of school needs of school-age children?
___	___	b. Are caregivers comfortable assuming many different roles to support the needs of school-age children--leading, listening, participating, observing, mediating and problem solving, guiding, and being an adult friend?
___	___	c. Do caregivers listen to and talk with children?

Yes	No		
___	___		d. Are caregivers flexible? Do they adjust to changes in children's needs and interests?
___	___		e. Do caregivers treat children with respect?
___	___		f. Do caregivers tune in to the needs of individual children and help each child grow towards independence at his or her own pace?
___	___		g. Do caregivers like to share interests, talents, and skills with children?
___	___	10.	**Schedule.** Does the program provide a schedule which is both organized and flexible?
___	___		a. Is the schedule paced to meet the varying needs of children?
___	___		b. Does the schedule balance time for quiet and active periods?
___	___		c. Does the schedule allow for changes in plans?
___	___		d. Does the schedule allow for simultaneous diverse activities to take place?
___	___		e. Does the schedule allow for smooth transitions from one activity to the next?
Key #3:			**Does the Program View Parents as Partners?**
___	___	11.	Does the program **accept** parents as the most important people in children's lives?
___	___	12.	Does the program **assess** the varying needs of parents in order to serve them well? Does the program try to find out about parents' different values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, stresses, pressures, and concerns?
___	___	13.	Does the program **accommodate** parents' needs to be involved in different ways?
___	___		a. Are there opportunities for parents to learn about the program through a newsletter or bulletin board?

Yes	No		
___	___		b. Are there opportunities for parents to participate on an advisory board?
___	___		c. Are there opportunities for parents to contribute time, talents, or resource materials to enhance center activities?
___	___	14.	Does the program develop an alliance with parents as resourceful partners?
___	___		a. Are parents always welcome visitors?
___	___		b. Do caregivers communicate with parents about children's needs, interests and activities through informal daily exchanges?
___	___		c. Does the program arrange formal parent conferences when appropriate?
Key #4:			**Does the Program Collaborate Effectively with Others Who Can Help?**
___	___	15.	Do the program staff have good communication skills? Do they have the ability to collaborate and cooperate effectively with others?
___	___	16.	Are the program administrators willing and able to make program adjustments in response to specific needs of the community if changes are warranted?
___	___	17.	Are policies and procedures established which allow for effective program coordination among groups and organizations who are involved in the program's operation? Are problems and concerns discussed and resolved in a timely manner?
___	___	18.	Is the program staff committed to using a variety of community resources to enrich the program and help children connect with their communities?

When the answers to most of these questions are "yes", it is likely that programs can meet the varying developmental and individual needs of school-age children. Before making a final decision, however, parents should look closely at how the program addresses health and safety issues. They should also look at who their child is to determine whether the program offers the "right fit" for the individual child's needs, temperament, interests, abilities, skills, and growing independence.

Trainer Notes:

Workshops for School-Age Professionals

To facilitate training sessions for school-age professionals you will need both the **Trainer's Guide** and **The Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**

Introduction to the Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals

The **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** is designed to allow you maximum flexibility as you plan workshops and training programs for different groups and organizations. Because training needs vary, it contains a wide variety of training exercises and activities that you can adapt, reduce, or expand according to the needs and requirements of the group. For example, you may be requested to conduct training for organizations which only have time or resources for you to conduct an overview of quality care in one or two half day sessions. Or, you may be invited to conduct ongoing, in-depth training on the four **Keys to Quality** over a period of weeks or months. The exercises in each module lend themselves to adaptations for short-term or long-term training. Each module of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** begins with a **Preview** of the concepts addressed in the exercises which follow. Below is a summary of how the training exercises are presented in the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**

Presentation of Workshop Exercises in the Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals

* Each module contains from two to five "core" exercises designed to help participants explore and understand concepts introduced in the **Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care** video. Complete directions are included for each exercise. However, additional suggestions to help trainer's introduce the exercises and facilitate related discussions are included in the **Trainer Notes** section of the **Trainer's Guide.**

* Except where noted, all exercises are designed for work in small groups. That is, participants work on the exercises in "break-out" groups (five to eight members per group), then return to the larger group to share and compare the results of their work. When the workshop you are leading has fewer than ten participants, there is no need to break into small groups. Instead, have all participants work together.

* Each exercise contains the following components:
  - A list of Resources (e.g. magic markers, chart paper, etc.)
  - An estimation of the Time Needed for Group Work
  - Instructions for completing the exercise.

* In some modules, the exercises build on one another; they use the results of activities in previous exercises. Participants should work together in the same small groups when results from one exercise are used in subsequent exercises.

* Although the training is designed with flexibility in mind, each module begins with "core" exercises which are sequential to some degree. If workshop time is limited, it is recommended that trainers begin with the first core exercise, using others in the order presented as time permits.

* Each core exercise is followed by suggestions for Adaptations or Extensions of the exercise. You can use selected Extensions in each module to help workshop participants build on the concepts explored in the core exercises. If there is not time in the workshop to include Extension exercises and activities, participants can follow the directions provided and do them on their own or with colleagues in their programs. The ideas and activities in many of the Extension exercises can be applied directly to school-age programs in the participants' communities. Extension exercises and activities need not be done in order. Trainers and participants may complete any or all of these exercises in the order they choose, based on their own needs, interests, and priorities.

* Following the directions for Extensions of each exercise, is a section on Independent Learning Suggestions. This section is designed to help participants do the core exercise or Extensions independently. These suggestions will be useful to participants if there is not sufficient workshop time available to include all core exercises.

* To complement and extend the participant's learning, supplementary readings and worksheets are included for some exercises. These appear in the last section of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**

Before planning any workshop or training sessions, familiarize yourself thoroughly with the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.** As you read each module, refer to the companion **Trainer Notes** for additional information and guidance. A brief overview of how the **Trainer Notes** are organized appears below.

Organization of the Trainer Notes for Module Exercises

The **Trainer Notes** for each module provide additional information and suggestions for implementing the training exercises and activities. **Trainer Notes** for each exercise include suggestions for introducing, facilitating, and building on concepts explored in the exercise. Generally, the notes for each exercise include the following sections:

* **Resources**--e.g. markers, chart paper, etc.

* **Time Needed**--estimated amount of time to allow for small group work, discussion, etc.

* **Introducing the Exercise**--includes tips for presenting the exercise.

* **Summary of Teaching Points**--highlights concepts and issues to emphasize when discussing and summarizing the purpose of each exercise and the results of group work.

* **Answer Guides**--provide additional information for evaluating the results of group work. (Note: in many cases group work can be evaluated by referring to the instructions and guidelines accompanying the exercises in the **Viewer's Guide.** In these cases, **Answer Guides** are not provided.)

* **Additional Suggestions**--include tips for adapting, expanding, or building on "core" exercises to further professional growth and development.

Other Tips for Trainers

1. **Plan and Conduct Training with the Characteristics of Adult Learners in Mind.**

   * Remember that adults, like children, learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Avoid long lectures and use the "hands-on" approach presented in the module exercises. Adults need opportunities to talk about and try out new ideas and concepts, not just hear about them.

   * Remember that adults are more likely to retain and use training when they perceive it as being directly related to their work and life.

   * Remember that adults who come to the training will come from many different backgrounds. Present the training in a way which accommodates individual differences in adults with regard to education and experience.

   * Recognize the adult learner's need to express ideas, feelings, and opinions; make choices and decisions; and exercise control over how they learn.

   * Respect the expertise, knowledge, and insights adult learners have gained through their life experiences. By acknowledging the value of their experiences, you can help them develop confidence in their ability to learn and try new approaches to working with school-age children.

   * Remember that adult learner's have high expectations of a trainer--they will count on you to be knowledgeable, prepared, interesting, and motivating!

2. **Retrieve and Use Available Resources Effectively.**

   While the **Trainer's Guide** and **Viewer's Guide** are comprehensive in scope, you can enhance the training by gathering other resources and referenced in the guides and sharing them with participants. A selected Resource Listing is included at the end of the **Trainer's Guide**.

Module One Trainer Notes

Video Key #1:

Planning Programs with School-Age Children in Mind

Preview

To introduce this module to workshop participants, use the content of the Module Preview Notes which appear on the next page. (This **Preview** also appears in Module One of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**) If time permits, include showing the portion of the video focusing on **Key #1: Planning Programs with School-Age Children in Mind.** Then proceed with the exercises you have chosen to include, using the **Trainer Notes** on the following pages.

Exercises Included in This Module

Exercise 1 A: What School-Age Children Want from School-Age Programs

Exercise 1 B: What Are School-Age Children Like?

Exercise 1 C: Child Care "Rights and Freedoms"?

Exercise 1 D: Program **"Response-Ability"** to Individual Differences

Preparation Notes

Check the **Resources** listing at the beginning of each exercise to be sure you have all the materials and supplies needed.

Module Preview Notes

The main reason it is important to base the plans for school-age programs on the needs of the children is simple--children will want to attend! School-age children have definite ideas about what they want to do, when and how they want to do it, where they want to go, and who they want to work and play with them as they explore the world. When this growing spirit of independence is respected, guided, and nurtured appropriately, school-age children can thrive.

The video introduces us to some of the main characteristics of school-age children. It portrays them as curious, industrious, active learners who are in the process of expanding their world beyond the family unit and growing gradually towards independence. It shows us that they want to learn how to do things that are useful in the "real world"; they want to feel competent and confident. And it shows us that they like to have time alone as well as time to work and play with others.

Unlike preschoolers, school-age children often participate in decisions about how and where they will spend their time. When programs fail to take a close look at who school-age children are and what they need, children can tell. And one of two things usually happens. They may convince their parents not to enroll them by saying things like: "That place is for babies; they do the same stuff I did in preschool." "Nobody likes it there--you always have to do the same thing everybody else is doing." "I can take care of myself." Or, if they are already enrolled in a program that doesn't address their needs, school-age children may make it evident through their behavior that they don't want to be there. If's often said that "school-age children vote with their feet"; if they don't like the program, if it doesn't meet their needs, if it isn't fun, they'll find a way not to participate.

During this training, you will participate in a variety of exercises designed to help you tune in to 1) the characteristic needs and interests of school-age children and 2) the individual differences among school-age children. As you work through the exercises, remember that although all school-age children pass through the same developmental stages as they grow, the way children experience the challenges of these stages will be different. This means that programs must be designed to support both the general needs of school-age children and the varying individual differences among them. In fact, the biggest challenge in program development may be: **how to create and implement programs that can accommodate and respond to individual differences among school-age children in a group setting.**

Exercise 1 A: What School-Age Children Want from School-Age Programs

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Marker (1 per group)
Chart Paper (1 sheet per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

20 - 30 minutes for small group work
15 - 20 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this small group exercise is to help participants look at school-age programs from the child's point of view. It can be difficult for adults to see things from the perspective of children in programs, especially if the adult's experience of childhood was very different from the childhood experiences of children today. For example, you might ask participants this question: "How many of you participated in a child care program every day after school for at least one year when you were a school-age child?" Chances are very good that few, if any, of the adults in your workshop will have attended child care when they were in elementary school. This has strong implications. It means that few adults have any idea of what it might be like to spend the "free time" out of school in a group setting. Therefore, it's very important for those of us who plan and operate programs to do everything we can to understand how children feel about being in a child care setting and what they want to do there.

Before dividing into groups, go over the Instructions for the exercise in the **Viewer's Guide.** Stress that this is a role play exercise; it will be important for each participant to talk from a child's point of view throughout the exercise. Point out the examples of the way children might say things which are provided in the instructions. Participants should concentrate on giving **"I"** messages from a child's point of view. Encourage participants to talk like children and express their "messages" with feeling. Provide each group with a magic marker and one sheet of chart paper to use for recording their list of "wants." After about 20 to 30 minutes of small group work, reconvene the larger group and have participants share and compare their lists of "wants". Use the following questions and the **Summary of Teaching Points** to guide the discussion. (The questions are also included in the **Viewer's Guide.)** Allow about 15 to 20 minutes for sharing.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which items on the list would be easy to accommodate?

2. Which items on the list would be difficult to accommodate?

3. What are the barriers to accommodating various items on the list? How could you overcome these barriers?

4. Do some items on the list conflict with what parents might want? What school personnel might want? What school-age professionals might want? What could be done to resolve these conflicts?

5. How have the programs featured in the video accommodated the wants of school-age children?

Summary of Teaching Points

During the discussion, be sure to highlight the following points:

* Many of the things children want can be easily accommodated with advance planning and preparation (e.g. the right to choose their own activities, the right to play with friends, the right to have some time alone).

* Some of the things children may want to do may be more difficult to accommodate (e.g. learn how to play the guitar, take gymnastics, go swimming, play on a soccer team,). But, again, with resourceful planning and creativity, programs may also be able to accommodate these "wants".

* Sometimes the "wants" of children may conflict with the "wants" of parents or with school staff. For example, parents, children, and school staff may have differing opinions on homework, the kinds of food offered, whether or not TV is used, whether free time should be allowed, etc. Talk with participants about how they might resolve some of these differences. Highlight the importance of communication, compromise, and other problem solving techniques during the discussion of these "conflicting" wants.

* Problem solving is an important skill for school-age professionals. When barriers to accommodating the needs of children exist, program staff should use an effective problem solving approach:

  1) Don't jump to conclusions. Stop and think before you assume a problem can't be solved.
  2) Analyze what the problem really is--define or redefine it.
  3) Brainstorm a list of solutions to the problem.
  4) Evaluate the list of possible solutions and decide which one(s) to try.
  5) Make an action plan and implement your solution.
  6) Check your progress to see if your solution is working. If it isn't, ask why. Make adjustments or try another solution.

Answer Guide

While there are no right or wrong answers to the role play exercise, here are some of the ways "children" might complete the statement:

When I go to my center I want to.....

* be left alone.
* go home as soon as I can.
* do whatever I want.
* be with my friends.
* call up my mom.

* visit places.
* play with my own toys.
* have lots of junk food to eat.
* watch TV.
* be a Girl Scout.
* read my book all afternoon.
* play basketball all afternoon.
* have lots of art projects.
* be left alone.
* have men teachers.
* chew gum and eat candy.
* have lots of time with the teacher.
* go to the bathroom by myself.
* learn how to play the drums.
* work on my baseball card collection.
* take my shoes off and get dirty.
* have a break from homework and school.
* get special attention.
* play pool.

and so on.....

Additional Suggestions

Variation of This Exercise

Following **Exercise 1 A** in the **Viewer's Guide** is an exercise titled **Remembering Your Own Childhood.** If time for discussion and sharing is limited, you may wish to replace **Exercise 1 A** with this exercise because **Remembering Your Own Childhood** does not require time for breaking out into small groups. The exercise can be completed in 20 to 30 minutes. Use the following steps to conduct the exercise:

* Explain to participants that one way to learn about what school-age children want from programs is to think about what we liked to do as school-age children.

* Ask participants to pick an age in their own childhoods that they remember fairly well. (Important Note: Acknowledge that sometimes it is difficult for adults to reflect on their childhood experiences, particularly if childhood brings back sad or painful memories. If there are members of the group who prefer not to reflect on their own childhoods, you might suggest that they think about the childhood of someone else they knew well as a child. However, point out that the purpose of this exercise is not

simply to conjure up pictures of an "ideal" childhood. Remind participants that some of the children in school-age programs may also be experiencing sadness or difficult problems. Staff empathy, understanding, and support will be invaluable to these children.)

* Once everyone has a childhood age in mind, ask participants to relax and close their eyes for a few moments and reflect on what life was like at that age. To guide participants reflections, read aloud the following questions. (The questions are also printed in the **Viewer's Guide.**) Be sure to allow enough time for participants to think about each question; pause about 15 seconds between questions.

Reflection Questions:

- What was your home and family like?
- What was your neighborhood like?
- What did you do immediately after school?
- Where did you go when you were not in school?
- Who did you spend your time with during out of school hours?
- Were you interested in learning how to do certain things? If yes, what were they?
- What did you like to do with your friends?
- Were there other people you wanted to get to know? If yes, who were they and why did you want to know them?
- What did you feel really good about?
- What did you feel not so good about? Or worried about?
- What did you need most from the adults in your life?
- If you had to think of one word or phrase to describe what you were like at this age, what would it be?
- Did you attend a child care program every day after school when you were this age? If yes, how did you feel about it? What did you like about it? What should have been different?
- If you didn't attend a child care program at this age, what would a program have had to offer in order to make you want to attend?

Following the reflection period, invite participants to share some of their childhood memories with members of the group. Use the following questions to guide the discussion. (These questions also appear in the **Viewer's Guide.**)

Discussion Questions:

1. What things did members of your group have in common as children?

2. How were you different from each other?
3. How was your childhood similar to the childhood of school-age children today? How was it different? What are the implications of these similarities or differences for school-age programs?

Independent Learning Suggestions

Exercise 1 A and **Remembering Your Own Childhood** can both be done independently, or in partnership with a co-worker or supervisor. Encourage participants to try these exercises with other staff in their program or with interested members of the community.

Exercise 1 B: What Are School-Age Children Like?

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (1 per group)
Chart Paper (6 sheets per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

20 - 30 minutes for small group work
20 - 25 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this small group exercise is to help participants identify the some of the common characteristics of school-age children. Most adults have developed views about what school-age children are like based on their experiences as parents, caregivers, teachers, relatives, or neighbors of school-age children. Their views may also be shaped by observations of children in their communities or on the media, or by education and reading about child development. By sharing views based on their experience, observation, and education, workshop participants can increase and broaden their understanding of the developmental characteristics of school-age children.

Before dividing into groups, review the Instructions for the exercise in the **Viewer's Guide** with participants. Emphasize that each group should begin the exercise by **brainstorming** a list of common characteristics of school-age children from the perspectives of group members. Remind participants that the

brainstorming technique requires people to include any items suggested by a member of the group; during brainstorming, no discussion or evaluation of the merits of any item should take place. When participants cannot think of any more characteristics, they should use the questions in the **Viewer's Guide** for this exercise to refine and separate the characteristics they listed into four separate categories: 1) characteristics the group agrees are typical of almost all school-age children, 2) characteristics the group agrees are typical of more than half of school-age children, 3) characteristics the group agrees describe less than half of school-age children, and 4) characteristics the group agrees describe only a very small percentage of school-age children. Provide each group with a magic marker and at least six sheets of chart paper--two sheets to record the initial list and one sheet for final versions of separate categories of characteristics. After about 20 to 30 minutes of small group work, reconvene the larger group and have small groups share and compare the four refined lists during group discussion. Refer to the **Summary of Teaching Points** which follow to help you guide the discussion.

Summary of Teaching Points

Focus on the following issues as groups share and compare their lists of characteristics of school-age children in response to the questions in the Instructions for the exercise.

Discussion of Questions 1 and 2:

1. What characteristics do you think are typical of almost all school-age children?
2. What characteristics do you think are typical of more than half of school-age children?

It can be difficult to identify a set of characteristics common to all or most school-age children. Even though there are many differences among school-age children, however, child development experts have identified a number of common developmental themes and tasks experienced by children during these years. Summarize the discussion of common characteristics of all or more than half of school-age children by sharing some of the characteristic developmental themes and tasks of the school-age years which have been identified by child development experts:

- They are moving towards independence and like to demonstrate they can be responsible, resourceful, and reliable.

- They are growing physically and need opportunities to exercise their bodies.

- They are developing increased small muscle control and like to learn and practice new physical skills using small muscles.

- They are developing new thinking and social skills which allow them to think about people, places, problems, and events beyond the immediate present and the immediate surroundings. Their attention spans are also increasing. As these skills continue to develop, they like to test them out--to question limits and authority, to engage in a variety of creative activities, and to participate in long term projects.

- They are interested in expanding their world beyond home and family and want to develop social relationships with peers, with adult friends, and with others in their communities. They enjoy being involved in projects which help others.

- They want to feel competent--to be good at things that are useful to themselves and others. While they like to be industrious and busy, they do not like to do "busy work." They are interested in activities and projects that reflect the "real world."

- They are experiencing many new thoughts and feelings as their minds and bodies grow and change and are working on developing a positive self-concept. They need many opportunities to explore and express new thoughts and feelings and may need help in expressing emotions appropriately. They also need opportunities to be alone from time to time.

School-age programs should be planned with these characteristic developmental themes and tasks in mind. For example, programs should provide many opportunities for school-age children to:

- work and play on their own, alone or with friends;

- make choices and contribute to shaping the program environment and activities;

- assume responsibilities;
- participate in a variety of physical activities;
- develop positive relationships with others;
- develop abilities and skills that are of interest to them, without pressuring them to succeed or compete excessively;
- engage in projects and activities that encourage creative thinking and creative expression;
- explore and contribute to their communities and the world at large; and
- receive positive guidance and support which helps them feel good about themselves as they grow and change.

It is important for school-age professionals to recognize that some of the common developmental themes and tasks of school-age children may result in challenging behaviors, especially if programs fail to keep these developmental themes and tasks in mind as programs are being planned. For example, when school-age children are not given the opportunity to make choices and decisions about what activities they would like to do, they may complain that activities are boring, too "babyish", etc. Or, they may simply refuse to participate in what is planned.

Discussion of Questions 3, and 4:

3. What characteristics do you think describe <u>less than half</u> of school-age children?

4. What characteristics do you think describe <u>only a very small percentage</u> of school-age children?

These questions ask participants to identify characteristics which they think describe some, but not all school-age children. For example, participants may observe that some, but not all, school-age children are shy, highly active, stubborn, happy, or bored. Remind participants that even though characteristics such as these may not be common among all or most school-age children, it is very important to plan programs which can accommodate different characteristics in school-age children. Also note that in every group of school-age children, there may be larger or smaller numbers of children with certain characteristics.

Sometimes these differences are related to the different ages of children enrolled. Differences may also be related to differences in temperament, skills, abilities, family and cultural background, etc. The Extension of This Exercise focuses on helping participants understand differences related to ages of children. **Exercise 1 D** focuses on accommodating individual differences among children in school-age programs.

Answer Guide

See discussion of **Questions 1 and 2** included in **Summary of Teaching Points** for this exercise.

Additional Suggestions

Extension of This Exercise

If time permits, conduct the exercise **Characteristics of Different Age Groups** described in the **Viewer's Guide** under Extension of This Exercise. This exercise asks participants to think about the children they know in each of three different age groups: 1) 5 - 7 year olds, 2) 8 - 10 year olds, and 3) 11 and 12 year olds. Have participants work in small groups and make a list of characteristics they think are common to each age group. After about 20 minutes, reconvene the larger group and share and compare the lists created by each group.

If there is not sufficient time to conduct this exercise, suggest that participants do this activity on their own or with a colleague at their center.

Teaching Points for This Exercise

* School-age programs often focus primarily on the needs of younger children because that is where the heaviest enrollment is. However, in order to keep children interested in programs as they grow and develop, it is necessary to make program adjustments which are keyed to the needs and interests of older children. Refer participants to the article on programming for older children which appears in the **Supplementary Readings** section of the **Viewer's** and **Trainer's Guides.** This article focuses on the developmental characteristics of

older children and provides specific programming tips to address the needs and interests of older children.

* As you discuss the differences among older and younger children, focus on some of the implications for programming. For example:

  - As older children develop longer attention spans and specialized interests and skills, they need opportunities to participate in longterm activities and projects which carry over from one day to the next and may last for weeks or months (e.g. weaving, photography, magic, or specialized cooking, jazz dance clubs; music lessons; ongoing chess tournaments; or sports clinics). Older children are also interested in tangible products which result from their activities and like to have opportunities to put on plays, exhibits, demonstrations, etc.

  - Due to their shorter attention spans, younger school-age children, are often content to participate in projects and activities which are shorter in duration and can be completed in one session (e.g. tie-dying a T-shirt, making a sand collage). Younger children also tend to be more process oriented and enjoy participating in many activities that do not necessarily result in a finished product or performance such as spontaneous, improvised dramatic play or dancing to music.

    <u>Examples of Program Implications:</u>

    * Programs need to design a flexible schedule which allows for simultaneous diverse activities to take place. Blocks of time should be established to allow older children to work on longterm projects and allow younger children to participate in several short term activities during the same time period.

    * Programs need to provide space and storage areas for longterm "works in progress."

    * Programs need to offer diverse activities which allow children to work at different skill and ability levels.

Answer Guide for This Exercise

While the characteristics of school-age children at different ages are not clear cut, there are general traits and tasks that are often associated with younger (ages 5-7), middle (ages 8 - 10), and older (ages 11 - 12) children. Examples for each age group include:

Ages 5 - 7

* Physical growth occurs at a slower rate, but interest in and need for large muscle activities continues.

* New social skills are developing in response to new challenges of school and child care (e.g. learning to cope in more structured situations, learning to cooperate with others, learning to express feelings with words rather than physical action). Children in this younger group tend to be enthusiastic about being part of a group, but usually enjoy working and playing with members of the same sex.

* Interest in having relationships with adults outside the family increases--they look to helpful adults for support and guidance and are generally eager to please adults.

* Small muscle control continues to develop. They enjoy making things, but often do not have the small muscle control to complete complicated projects easily. "Hands-on", exploratory projects are popular. Older children in this group are often more coordinated and have longer attention spans which allow them to enjoy skill oriented activities. They can often work productively on their own for longer periods of time.

* Thinking skills are not usually developed to a point which allows children to see "grey areas" when problems or disagreements occur. They are often preoccupied with "right and wrong", "fair and unfair" as their moral sense continues to develop. Clear-cut rules and expectations are often reassuring to children in this stage.

Ages 8 - 10

* Another period of physical growth often makes children in the middle school-age years look much more grown up than 5 - 7 year olds. Some 9 and 10 year olds will begin to enter into the period of early adolescence--a time of rapid physical growth, second only to infancy. As they enter this period of development, they often begin to look not only at the immediate world around them, but also at the world of adulthood which lies ahead. Girls are likely to begin this development earlier than boys.

* Interest in leaving "being a little kid" behind increases, as does interest in being more grown up. They like to be independent and do things on their own. Sometimes this leads them to try to do things they're not quite ready for.

* Increasing attention spans, small muscle control, and thinking abilities allow them to enjoy a wide variety of complex games, art and construction projects. They are often fascinated with collecting, categorizing, and inventing things.

* Socialization skills increase as children explore new relationships. They enjoy participating alongside adults in games and activities. "Best friends" and special groups or cliques are common. As a result, clubs are very popular with this age group. While boys and girls in this group usually play in separate groups, they often begin to show interest in each other by teasing. Generally, the older children in this age group are more settled, feel comfortable with themselves and accepting of others. As they become more confident, they are often interested in helping or teaching others.

* Physical and intellectual competencies are increasing and children often become very interested in competitive activities which allow them to test just how good they are. Children in this age group are also capable of increased cooperation, "sportsmanship," and problem-solving, providing they receive appropriate support and guidance.

Ages 11 and 12

* Rapid physical growth and change continues as more and more children enter early adolescence. Different children of the same age within this group may vary as much as six years in terms of physical maturity. Children in this group have increased needs for independence and exploration in a safe, supportive environment. They also need a wide variety of opportunities to exercise their growing bodies as well as opportunities to develop competencies and mastery in many areas.

* Self-definition becomes very important to older school-age children. They need many opportunities for meaningful, "real-life" activities to help them with the developmental task of self-definition and to help them feel connected to their communities. Creative experiences are valuable to them as they develop an understanding and acceptance of themselves. Community involvement is also important to older children who like to feel they can have an impact on the world they live in.

* Thinking skills continue to increase, allowing children to form new views, values, and ideas. They need many opportunities to express new thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

* Social skills continue to develop, allowing children to form positive relationships with peers and adults. Boys and girls in this age group often enjoy working together on projects and activities. While parents continue to be very important to older school-age children, they also see other adults as important role models and confidants who they can look to as a source of guidance, support, and encouragement. However, because they are in the process of developing values and beliefs, they may also challenge adult authority as they test out their new ideas and establish their independence.

Independent Learning Suggestions

The **Viewer's Guide** includes two exercises which participants can use as tools for independent learning:

1. **Observation of School-Age Children in a Group.** Suggest that workshop participants do this observation as a follow-up to the training. The purpose of this exercise is to help participants learn more about the characteristics of school-age children through direct observation. It directs the learner to observe the same group of school-age children for 30 to 45 minutes on at least three different occasions, and provides a set of questions to help learners focus their observations. Learners should discuss the results of their observations with a colleague or supervisor.

2. **Four Developmental Characteristics.** This independent learning exercise focuses on four areas of development commonly used by child development specialists in describing children's patterns of growth and development: 1) Physical Development, 2) Intellectual Development, 3) Social Development, and 4) Emotional Development. The exercise includes brief summaries of characteristic needs in these four areas. Then, for each area, space is provided for learners to list the program planning implications based on these needs. There are two ways to use this exercise: 1) as a independent learning exercise incorporated as part of a training session, or 2) as a follow-up exercise to the training. If you choose to incorporate this exercise as part of a training session, an **Answer Guide** is provided to help you facilitate a group discussion of the exercise. Have participants work in small groups to develop **Implications for Planning School-Age Child Care Programs** related to each area of development. Allow about 45 minutes for small group work. If time is limited, have each small group develop a list for one area of development and reconvene the larger group for sharing after about 15 minutes. Allow about 20 to 30 minutes for large group discussion.

Answer Guide for This Exercise

Following are examples of **Implications for Planning School-Age Child Care Programs** related to each area of child development. Participants may think of additional implications not included here.

<u>Social Development</u>

* Involve children in setting program rules that encourage positive social interaction and cooperation.

* Use activities as opportunities to teach and reinforce communication, social, and problem solving skills.

* Provide activities which help children become aware of and accepting of people of different ages, cultures, and abilities.

* Be sensitive to the growing need for independence in each child, offering support and assistance without interfering.

* Be sensitive to children's varying abilities to interact with others and give assistance to both withdrawn and aggressive children.

* Provide opportunities for children to work and play in small groups. Recognize that clubs based on mutual interests, skills, or abilities of a small group of children are excellent opportunities for positive social interaction.

* Provide field trips, visitors, and other information to help children connect with their community.

* Provide opportunities for children to use their abilities, skills and talents to help or entertain others.

Emotional Development

* Talk with children to help them identify and understand their new thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Help children learn new words to describe their feelings to others.

* Provide opportunities for children to express their feelings creatively and appropriately through music, dance, writing, art, role playing, and other dramatic play activities.

* Teach skills for problem solving through dramatic play activities (e.g. storytelling, role playing, and puppetry).

* Give children positive feedback when they handle hurt feelings, rejection, or other problems with self-control and confidence.

* Respect children's need for privacy. Provide private areas where children to relax by themselves if they need some time. Provide storage space for personal belongings.

Physical Development

* Provide lots of opportunities for children to use their bodies in a variety of ways. Both **large muscle** activities and **small muscle** activities should be included. Plan activities which can accommodate different levels of abilities and skills.

* Be sensitive to how children feel about their size or physical development, particularly during periods of rapid growth and change. Encourage less active children to participate in some type of physical activity without pressuring them to engage in highly active sports and games.

* Offer a balance of competitive and cooperative sports and games.

* Provide opportunities for children to learn about personal hygiene, and the benefits of good nutrition and regular exercise.

Intellectual Development

* Encourage children's imagination by providing many activities that encourage them to explore, create, investigate, and invent.

* Encourage and stimulate children's curiosity by asking them open-ended "what if" questions as they participate in activities and solve problems.

* Provide children with many opportunities to choose what activities they would like to do.

* Provide activities which support children's growing interest in learning about people, places, and ideas beyond the home, family, and the immediate environment.

* Recognize and accept differences in childrens' abilities to be flexible as they deal with problems and conflicts.

Exercise 1 C: Child Care "Rights and Freedoms?"

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (Several colors per group)
Chart Paper (1 sheet per group, more if requested)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

20 - 25 minutes for small group work
15 - 20 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information as a basis for introducing this exercise:

This small group exercise is designed to give participants a close look at what school-age children think out of school programs should be like. It is based on an actual conversation between a group of 5th and 6th grade children and a program leader. The children began the conversation with this demand: "We want to know what our child care rights and freedoms are; we've been learning about the Bill of Rights in school and we think there ought to be child care rights and freedoms, too." During the course of the conversation, the children identified the following seven child care "rights and freedoms". (This list also appears in the **Viewer's Guide**.)

1) "The right to have fun."
2) "The right to play with our friends."
3) "The right to choose what we want to do."
4) "The right to learn new things--not just the same stuff we learn in school.

5) "The right to be creative--not just in art. We want to make up things--new snacks, new rules to old games, new inventions--stuff like that."
6) "The right to privacy--we need a place to put our things and a place to be alone."
7) "Freedom from bother--we don't want other kids to ruin our stuff or teachers telling us what to do every minute."

Working in small groups, participants are asked to review and discuss the implications of this list of rights and freedoms.

Before dividing into small groups, review the Instructions for the exercise in the **Viewer's Guide** which asks participants to discuss the following questions:

1. How do you feel about the idea of children having child care "rights and freedoms"?

2. Based on your knowledge of child development, how do these "rights and freedoms" reflect the developmental needs of school-age children?

3. If you were going to plan a school-age program based on child care "rights and freedoms" identified by these children, what would it look like?"

Provide each group with several magic markers and one sheet of chart paper for posting a summary of their answers to the Question 3. Encourage groups to create simple drawings to illustrate and add life to their summaries. After about 20 to 25 minutes of small group discussion, reconvene the larger group and share and compare the summaries they developed. (Note: If time is limited, omit the small group work and introduce the scenario of the 7 Child Care "Rights and Freedoms" as the basis for large group discussion, allowing about 20 minutes for discussion.)

Summary of Teaching Points

During the discussion, be sure to emphasize the following points:

* It's important for school-age professionals to recognize that school-age children have many good ideas about what school-age programs should be like. Adults need to listen to and respect their ideas, feelings, and opinions. School-age children want and need to have a role in shaping the program environment and activities.

* Conflicts between staff and children often result when their views are not considered. In fact, children usually find a way not to attend programs where adults do not invite and respond to their ideas about what they would like to do.

* The children in this scenario felt strongly that the school-age program should provide "Freedom from Bother." Appropriate rules and limits can support this freedom. School-age children need to participate in making the rules and limits they will live by in the program.

Answer Guide

The following answers are examples of possible answers to discussion Questions 2 and 3. No sample answers are provided for Question 1 which asks participants to talk about their feelings.

Question 2: Examples of Possible Answers

* School-age children need to develop positive social relationships with peers.

* School-age children are moving towards independence and need to make choices and decisions about things that affect them.

* School-age children need to try out their new thinking skills; they like to creative, invent, and explore.

* School-age children are moving beyond home and family; they are interested in learning about new people, new places, new ideas, etc.

* School-age children are developing a sense of self-esteem; they need privacy, time to think, and respect from peers and adults.

Question 3: Examples of Possible Answers

A school-age program based on the child care "rights and freedoms" identified by the children would have:

* A flexible schedule with opportunities for children to children to have input in the planning of the program.

* Attractive, well-organized space offering a wide variety of simultaneous activities for children to

choose from--science, nature, art, music, sports and games, cooking, table and board games, cooking, etc.

* Opportunities for children to play on their or in small groups--special clubs might be a regular feature of the program.

* Private "nooks and crannies" where children could spend time alone, read a book, listen to music, or visit with a friend.

* Sufficient protected storage areas where children could keep their belongings.

Additional Suggestions

Extension of This Exercise

If time permits, use the questions listed below to lead a discussion about the way the program leader in the scenario responded to the children's "demands" for child care "rights and freedoms." (These questions are also listed in the **Viewer's Guide.**)

1. How did you feel about the way the program leader in the scenario responded to the children's "demand"? Was the response in tune with their developmental needs? Would you have responded in the same way? Would you have responded differently? Elaborate on your feelings.

2. What are some ways the program leader might use the list of "rights and freedoms" with children at the center?

3. How do you think the children in your program (or in your community) feel about their child care "rights and freedoms"? If you're not sure, how could you find out?

Although there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, it is important for caregivers to acknowledge how they feel when children challenge them or press issues like child care "rights and freedoms". When caregivers can view challenges from children as opportunities for creative problem solving, conflicts are minimized because programs can be more responsive to children's developmental needs. For example, as you discuss Question 2, point out that one of the ways a program leader might use the

list of "rights and freedoms" with children would be to lead a discussion on what center rules and limits would help guarantee the child care "rights and freedoms". A list of rules and limits devised by the children could then be posted in the center alongside the list of "rights and freedoms." Remind participants that when school-age children participate in setting rules and limits, they feel respected and capable. They also develop a commitment to living by the rules which helps them exercise self-control and good judgement.

Independent Learning Suggestions

If time for conducting **Exercise 1 C** is limited, suggest that participants think through their answers to questions posed in the core exercise and the extension of the exercise. Encourage them to discuss their answers with a colleague or supervisor.

Exercise 1 D: Program "Response-ability" to Individual Differences

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (1 per group)
Chart Paper (Several sheets per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

1 to 1 1/2 hours for small group work
1 hour for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

This is a fantasy exercise, designed to encourage participants to use their creative imagination to learn more about the individual needs of school-age children. Use the following information to develop your presentation of the exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants recognize the importance of planning programs which are responsive to both the characteristic developmental needs of school-age children and the individual differences among children. Even children in the same age group have many differences among them--differences which may be related to temperament, abilities, talents, interests, skills, family and cultural background, etc. This exercise is designed to 1) help participants gain a clearer understanding of the individual differences among school-age children and 2) to emphasize that programs should assess and build on their ability to respond to individual differences in a group setting.

As a basis for this exercise, work with the large group to create a fantasy group of children who will be enrolled in a new school-age child care program which participants will be

responsible for planning. This fantasy group will be made up of famous people. Have the group brainstorm a list of 20 to 30 celebrities, literary or TV characters, and/or famous characters from different walks of life. Be sure that every name on the list is familiar to all participants. It is important to create a list of people with many different characteristics; the more diverse the group is, the more interesting and challenging it will be for participants to plan a program responsive to their needs. If the celebrities suggested by the group do not seem different enough from one another, add some names to the list yourself. Use some of the names on following list (or other names familiar to you) if you need to add more diversity:

Whoopi Goldberg
Hillary Clinton
Michael Jordan
Dan Rather
Bill Clinton
Rambo
Jane Fonda
Al Gore
John McEnroe
Cher
Tom Cruise
Oprah Winfrey
Jack Nicholson
Mother Teresa
Barbara Bush
Billy Crystal
William Shakespeare
Sally Fields
Phil Donahue
Robin Williams
Queen Elizabeth
David Letterman
Roseanne Barr
Jesse Jackson
Sandra Day O'Connor
Bill Cosby
Bette Midler
Joan Lunden
Bart Simpson
Martin Luther King
Jacques Cousteau
George Bush
Janet Reno
Julia Childs

Once participants have completed their list, ask them to imagine that all the people on the list are now school-age children who will be attending their school-age program. Explain that participants will now work in small groups to complete a two-part exercise. In **Part One**, small groups will analyze the characteristics of the "children" on the list created by the larger group. In **Part Two**, small groups will examine ways a school-age program could use this information to meet the "children's" needs.

Before dividing into groups, direct participants' attention to the discussion questions provided in the Instructions in the **Viewer's Guide for Part One: Tuning in to Individual Differences.** Suggest that before groups discuss these questions, they should allow a few moments for each participant to think about them and jot down some of their ideas in the space provided in the **Viewer's Guide.** Tell groups they will have 20 to 30 minutes for this discussion. Provide each group with a magic

marker and several sheets of chart paper to use for posting a summary of their answers to the discussion questions. Here are the questions as they appear in exercise directions for **Part One** in the **Viewer's Guide:**

1. What individual differences exist among these "children"? Hint--some differences among people develop in relation to external influences like family upbringing or the type of neighborhood they live in. Others stem from inborn tendencies or traits--like body type, or temperamental characteristics like shyness or a child's activity level. Identify as many differences as you can. Be very specific. The more you know about the "children", the easier it will be for you to plan a program which will match their needs.

2. Which differences among these "children" may be difficult to respond to in a group setting?

3. Which differences among these "children" could be seen as resources that would enrich the program?

After about 20 minutes, tell groups it is time to bring their discussions to a close and summarize their answers to the three discussion questions on the chart paper you provided. When all groups have finished with **Part One**, have them pause while you go over the Instructions for **Part Two: Developing Program "Response-ability".**

In **Part Two** of this exercise, participants use their knowledge of the characteristic needs of school-age children and their assessments of the individual differences among their celebrity "children" to develop a profile of how a school-age program could be designed to meet their needs. Instruct participants to use the questions in **Part Two** to help them develop program "response-ability". Stress that program **"response-ability"** has two implications: 1) it implies that programs have a **responsibility** to meet the individual needs of children, and, 2) it suggests that it is important to look at the way a program is structured in order to analyze and improve on a program's **ability to be responsive** to individual needs. Tell groups they will have about one hour to discuss the questions. Provide groups with additional sheets of chart paper. As they discuss each question, groups should summarize the points on which members agree and transfer their summaries to chart paper for sharing later in the session. After about an hour, groups will present their assessments of the needs of the celebrity "children" and their program **"response-ability"** summaries to the larger group for review and discussion. Here are the questions as they appear in **Part Two** of the **Viewer's Guide:**

1. "Children" in your group probably have a wide variety of interests. Identify the interests they might have in common as well as those that are unique to certain individuals. Then make a list of some ways your program could respond to these interests.

2. Based on the list you generated in Question 1, what kinds of space and program resources would be needed to support the interests of the "children"?

3. It is likely that the "children" in your group may have widely varying temperaments and personal styles. Review your list of "children" again with the following examples in mind:

   * Are some highly active, while others are more passive?
   * Do some appear to be adaptable and easy-going, while others seem to find it hard to make changes?
   * Do some seem to shy away from new people, places, and experiences, while others seem more out-going?
   * Do some seem tense and excitable, while others seem calm and steady?
   * Do some seem to have a tendency to act without thinking, while others seem to be reflective and plan ahead before acting?
   * Do some seem to be very persistent and have a tendency to keep on trying no matter how challenging a situation might be, while others seem to give up easily?
   * Do some seem especially sensitive to things in the environment like heat, light, sound, smell, or touch? Are there others who you think might not be very sensitive to stimuli in the environment? Along the same lines, do some seem to get frustrated easily or have their feelings hurt easily, while others seem like the kind of "child" who is not easily frustrated or hurt?
   * Do you think some of these "children" might find it hard to focus on what they are doing, while others might find it easy to concentrate no matter what was going on around them?

   These are some examples of temperamental differences in children; there are many possible variations between the extremes noted in the examples. Temperamental differences can have a powerful influence on the way children experience and respond to the child care environment. Because of this, it's important to anticipate these differences as we plan programs. With this in mind, look again at your group of children and list some examples of how the temperamental

differences among them might influence the following aspects of your program:

* Space:

* Schedule:

* Groupings (Small Group, Large Group, Independent Work and Play):

* Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

* Other Areas Your Group Identifies:

At the end of an hour, tell groups it is time to finalize their summaries. Allow another 15 to 30 minutes for them to complete their work. Reconvene the larger group and ask one member of each small group to present the summaries of answers to questions in **Part One** and **Part Two** for comparing and sharing. Refer to the following **Summary of Teaching Points** as you guide the discussion.

Summary of Teaching Points

During the discussion, be sure to bring out the following points:

* It is important for school-age programs to develop an awareness of the individual differences among children enrolled by talking with parents and children and by observing children in action.

* By acknowledging and respecting differences among children, programs encourage children to value and care for one another.

* Conflicts among children and between children and staff in school-age programs often occur because there is a mismatch between the needs of individual children and the expectations or demands of the environment. When programs respect individual differences among children and plan accordingly, many conflicts can be minimized and others can be eliminated entirely. For example, school-age children have many varying interests, abilities, and skills. It is

unrealistic to plan school-age programs in ways which require all children to do the same thing at the same time in the same way. This type of programming often brings out the worst in children who demonstrate through negative behavior that they are frustrated, resentful of, or bored with activities that don't match their interests, abilities, or skills. Designing the program in a way which provides children with a variety of simultaneous activity choices is a more realistic approach to accommodating individual differences in a group setting.

* The individual differences among school-age children can often be tapped as resources for improving and enriching the program. Examples:

  - A child who has advanced skills for playing basketball might enjoy leading a basketball clinic or club for children who want to improve their skills.

  - A child with a talent for dancing might enjoy organizing a dance club or a cheerleading club.

  - A child who has traveled a great deal might like to help set up a travel agency for the dramatic play area.

  - A child who loves to read might like to read stories to younger children, tape record stories for non-readers to listen to, or organize a book club.

* Differences in temperament account for many of the individual differences among children. Temperamental traits are inborn and strongly affect the way children experience the world around them. With this in mind, caregivers should make an effort to tune in to the differences related to temperament among children and make program adjustments with these differences in mind. For example, it may be very difficult for a child with a high activity level to sit still for any length of time immediately after school; active children often need to unwind and blow off steam right after school. Children with lower activity levels, however, may prefer to talk quietly with a friend after school. Still other children may have internal body clocks that make them very hungry right after school. By offering several activity options when children arrive after school (e.g. free play outside, self-serve snack inside, quiet corner visiting with friends inside or outside), programs can accommodate children's varying needs for physical exercise, eating, and relaxation.

Answer Guide

Part One. Because the answers to questions in **Part One** will be based on participants' subjective views of the "children" in the celebrity group they created, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.

Part Two. Again, the answers to questions in **Part Two** will be based on participants' subjective views of the "children" in the celebrity group they created, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. However, the following examples might be helpful in guiding the discussion of how temperamental differences among the "children" might influence the program components listed in Question 3. The group may think of many more examples than those listed here.

* Space:

  - Sufficient indoor and outdoor space and equipment for physical exercise should be available for children with high activity levels.

  - Comfortable, quiet, soothing, private areas should be provided for children who are easily frustrated, are easily over-stimulated (by excessive noise, light, colors) and may react to over-stimulation with intensity.

  - Areas for noisy and quiet activities should be separated to make it easier for children who are distractible to focus in on what they are doing.

  - The environment should have some consistency from day to day to reduce the need for children to adapt to a new room arrangement every day.

* Schedule:

  - Scheduling of snacks, meals, rest periods, and using the bathroom should take into account differences in children's bodily rhythms. For example, the time set aside for snack should be long enough to accommodate different eating schedules of children enrolled. Some children may want to eat as soon as they arrive. Others may not be hungry until they have had some exercise.

- The schedule should provide regularly scheduled daily routines to support children who find it difficult to adapt to change.

- Transition periods should be built into the schedule to reduce the need for children to make quick adjustments or change abruptly from one activity to the next.

- The schedule should be flexible enough to accommodate children's varying abilities to be persistent and attend to activities for long periods of time. That is, over a period of an hour, the schedule should allow children with shorter attention spans to participate in several different activities. Yet, during the same time period, the schedule should allow highly persistent children to continue working on long term projects or activities of interest to them.

* Groupings (Small Group, Large Group, Independent Work and Play)

  - Opportunities to work and play alone or with a small group of children should be available for children who become overwhelmed or over stimulated by large group activities.

  - Opportunities to work independently on their own and in small groups should be provided for children who are able to concentrate and work on complex activities for long periods of time.

  - Activities involving large groups of children (e.g. sports and games, music and dance) should not over-emphasize competition which may cause children who are intense, easily frustrated or over-stimulated to lose self-control.

* Staff Roles and Responsibilities

  - Staff should be trained to recognize and respond to children's varying needs for attention, support, and direction.

  - Efforts should be made to ensure that all staff are not assigned to lead activities which make it impossible for them to respond to individual needs of children. For example, if a program with three

staff members plans to have one caregiver oversee a gymnastics club, the second caregiver supervise a hot wax crayon project, and the third caregiver conduct a complicated science experiment, no one will be available to help children who may need closer supervision. Instead of assigning every staff member to lead an activity, one staff person should assigned the role of facilitator and be available to provide help to children who need frequent monitoring and guidance.

Additional Suggestions

Extensions of This Exercise

The **Viewer's Guide** provides participants with two suggestions for extending this exercise:

1. Participants are encouraged to develop survey tools for use in collecting information about individual children. A number of resources are suggested in the **Viewer's Guide** which can help participants with this task. Suggest that participants work with a colleague or a supervisor to create survey tools which will help them learn more about the individual children their program serves or plans to serve.

2. Participants are referred to the supplementary readings and worksheets related to individual differences which appear in the last section of the **Viewer's Guide**. Encourage participants who are already operating programs to use these worksheets to help them tune in to individual differences among children in their programs. Readings and worksheets which are specifically related to individual differences include:

   * **OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN TEMPERAMENT AND ATTENTION**

   * **WORKSHEET--LOOKING AT SPECIAL NEEDS IN SACC**

   * **DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN SCHOOL-AGE CENTERS** (Includes seven scenarios featuring typical situations related to individual differences in children. Participants can use these with colleagues or supervisors as a basis for discussion and problem solving sessions.)

- **QUESTIONS TO HELP CAREGIVERS RESPOND TO INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES** (Provides a list of questions to help participants learn more about the unique temperamental characteristics of children in their programs.)

- **ANTICIPATING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS RELATED TO TEMPERAMENT IN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN** (Includes a list of typical situations in school-age child care programs which could be challenging and difficult for children with extreme temperamental characteristics. Participants are encouraged to think about how individual children in their programs might react in these situations and discuss what they could do to help the child if the situation occurred.)

Independent Learning Suggestions

The **Viewer's Guide** encourages readers to complete **Exercise 1 D** independently or with a partner or co-worker if they are not able to do the exercise in a workshop setting. If sufficient time is not available to complete **Exercise 1 D** in the training session you are conducting, refer participants to the Independent Learning Suggestions.

Module Two Trainer Notes

Video Key #2:

Organizing for Diversity and Choice

Preview

To introduce this module to workshop participants, use the Module Preview Notes which appear on the next page. (This **Preview** also appears in Module One of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**) If time permits, incorporate showing the portion of the video devoted to **Key #2: Organizing for Diversity and Choice.** Then proceed with the exercises you have chosen to include, using the **Trainer Notes** on the following pages.

Exercises Included in This Module

Exercise 2 A: Using Available Space Effectively

Exercise 2 B: Developing Clubs Around Interest Areas

Exercise 2 C: Developing a Schedule Which Reflects the Needs of School-Age Children

Exercise 2 D: Using Appropriate Staff Roles to Manage Center Activities and Events

Exercise 2 E: Sharing Staff Interests and Skills with School-Age Children

Preparation Notes

Check the **Resources** listing at the beginning of each exercise to be sure you have all the materials and supplies needed.

Module Preview Notes

Now that you have completed the exercises in **Module One**, you know that any group of school-age children will exhibit a wide variety of developmental and individual characteristics and needs. In view of this, programs structured in a way which requires all children to do the same thing in the same way at the same time will not be successful in keeping children interested and involved over time. On the other hand, programs designed around the idea that all school-age children have the skills needed to function with self-direction, self-control, and self-confidence in the face of overwhelming choices and stimuli usually disintegrate into chaos.

The diverse needs, characteristics, and interests of school-age children require a flexible atmosphere which supports diversity and choice for children with varying capacities for independent action. But flexible, diverse, informal programs don't happen accidentally. It takes careful planning, creativity, and organization to make this kind of program work. Children do not necessarily need to see evidence of every aspect of the program's underlying structure. But, an underlying structure should definitely be there. The human skeleton provides a useful analogy. Though it's not visible to the eye, it provides the framework which helps us function and move about in a coordinated fashion with flexibility, ease, and independence. The framework underlying a quality school-age program is similarly well-organized, yet flexible.

In this module, you will have an opportunity to develop specific plans for organizing programs which support diversity and choice for children with varying capabilities, needs, and interests. In many ways, school-age professionals in quality school-age programs function like highly skilled Air Traffic Controllers: They know who's taking off, who's coming in for a landing, who's in a holding pattern, who's running out of fuel, who's experiencing turbulence, who's having engine trouble, and who's been sitting on the runway much too long. These school-age professionals are well-organized and develop effective strategies for managing the environment with care, safety, and ease. The exercises focus on three key areas: **Space**, **Scheduling**, and **Staffing**.

Exercise 2 A: Using Available Space Effectively

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (Several different colors per group)
Scissors (1 per group)
Graph Paper (1 pad per group)
Ruler (1 per group)
Scotch Tape (1 role per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)
Chart Paper (8 to 10 sheets per group)
Pencils (1 per participant)
Half a Childhood--Time for School-Age Child Care (For Extension exercises only--1 copy for each group. Consult **Resource Listing.**)
Activities for School-Age Child Care (For Extension exercises only--1 copy for each group. Consult **Resource Listing.**)

Time Needed

1 1/2 to 2 hours for small group work
45 minutes to 1 hour for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to give participants "hands-on" experience in designing a center environment which supports diversity and choice for children in school-age programs. Introduce this exercise by delivering a lecturette on **Considerations for Setting Up Space in School-Age Programs.** Use the information which follows as a basis for your presentation. This information also appears in the **Viewer's Guide** in the Instructions for **Exercise 2 A.** In view of this, it will not be necessary for participants to take notes during your lecturette. If you did not show the portion of the video devoted to **Key #2** when you gave a preview of the module, you may want to preface or conclude your lecturette by showing the video segment which

highlights **Space.** Keep your presentation brief; allow about 15 to 20 minutes for delivering your remarks and showing the video segment if you choose to include it.

Information for Lecturette

In order to provide school-age children with opportunities to choose their own activities, quality programs for school-age children set up the space with a variety of areas which have furniture, equipment, and supplies related to a particular interest of school-age children. These areas are referred to as "Interest Areas". In some programs they may be called by other names such as "Activity Centers", but the concept is the same. In choosing what interest areas to offer, it is important to consider the developmental and individual needs and characteristics of the children being served. Typically, quality school-age programs offer interest areas such as:

* **Board and Table Games Area** (for playing cards, board games, games like jacks, pick-up-sticks, dominoes, etc.).

* **Quiet Area** (for reading, relaxing, doing homework, talking quietly with a friend, listening to tapes using a headphone set, etc.)

* **Block and Construction Area** (for building structures with unit blocks, legos, Lincoln logs, etc. The area is usually stocked with miniature props like plastic people and animals for children to use with the structures they build.)

* **Large Movement Area** (for dancing, rehearsing a play, holding clubs like gymnastics or aerobics, having a sing-a-long, playing indoor nerf ball games or cooperative games for large groups.)

* **Sand and Water Table Area** (a soothing place where children can explore and experience the properties of these materials, especially appealing to younger children.)

* **Dramatic Play Area** (for playing with props, equipment and furniture which stimulates imagination and role playing. While it is often set up as a housekeeping area, school-age children enjoy many other kinds of props for role-playing, especially those that allow them to try out different jobs or roles held by adults in the larger world they are beginning to experience.)

* **Arts and Crafts Area** (for exploring a wide variety of arts and crafts materials and techniques--many school-age children are ready to expand their art activities to include those that require small muscle coordination and skills such as calligraphy, wood carving, mask making, or water colors.)

* **Science, Math, and Nature Area** (for collecting, categorizing, comparing, exploring, experimenting, investigating, inventing, and testing out new thinking capacities.)

* **Woodworking Area** (for exploring the properties of wood, developing and using small muscle skills, and making things that are beautiful as well as useful in the "real world".)

* **Music Area** (for exploring the world of sound through listening, singing, dancing, making up songs, and playing instruments.)

* **Project and Hobby Area** (for displaying and storing long term projects so they won't be disturbed or ruined--an ongoing chess game, a gardening project, a rock collection, etc.)

* **Snack and Cooking Area** (for preparing and serving daily snacks and conducting special cooking projects or clubs.)

Interest areas make it possible for children to work and play on their own. These areas vary in size depending on the amount of space needed for furniture, equipment, and supplies and the number of children who are likely to use the area. Interest areas also vary in character and style--some are formal, others informal. Some feature soft items to create a cozy, comfortable atmosphere for a few children. Other provide more open space to encourage social interactions and active games for groups of children. Although school-age staff usually take the lead in establishing the basic interest areas, quality programs invite children's suggestions and participation in creating and changing these areas.

At the end of your lecturette, pause briefly for questions.

* * * * * * * * *

Following the lecturette, explain that participants will now work in small groups to design a center environment which supports diversity and choice for school-age children. Before dividing into groups, go over the Instructions for completing **Exercise 2 A** listed under **The Task** in the **Viewer's Guide** and answer any

participant questions. Distribute the resources groups will need for this task (see **Resources** listing). Tell participants how much time they will have for small group work. Allow 1 1/2 to 2 hours, depending on the time available. Encourage participants to refer to the list of interest areas provided in the **Viewer's Guide** as they work through the exercise.

Throughout this exercise, circulate among the groups to answer questions, make observations, give suggestions, and generally keep the groups focused on the task. If some groups choose to develop designs for programs in shared space such as cafeterias and gymnasiums, refer them to the supplementary reading **Presto Environments in Shared Space** in the back of the **Viewer's Guide.** Let participants know when there is about 1/2 hour remaining for group work; encourage them to begin posting their final plan on the chart paper if they haven't begun to do so.

When all groups have finished their center designs, reconvene the larger group. Post each group's design around the room. Ask one representative from each group to report on the plan designed by his or her group. Discuss each plan as it is presented, soliciting comments and suggestions from the larger group. Encourage participants to evaluate the designs based on how closely they follow the eight steps in the exercise. Use the following **Summary of Teaching Points** to help you guide the discussion.

Summary of Teaching Points

During discussion, be sure to highlight the following points:

* It is important to assess and analyze the basic elements of the available space before making a center room design, such as:

  - General layout (doors, window, sinks, outlets, etc.)
  - Size
  - Amount of storage space available
  - Best features of the space and how to use them (e.g. attractive windows and view, built-in shelving, ample wall space for displaying children's work, etc.)
  - Worst features of the space and how to work around them (e.g. wide open spaces in gyms and cafeterias, poor acoustics, rooms that are too hot or too cold, rooms with no closets or storage areas)

* Advance plans for interest areas should be defined and developed in detail. Plans should specify the purpose of the area; the furniture, equipment, and supplies needed to implement the area; the approximate amount of space needed.

* Center room designs should include adequate space for functional areas such as storage, staff work areas, parent pick-up and information area, etc.

* Using graph paper and cut-outs of furniture and equipment as a basis for designing a center is an efficient and effective way to plan. It takes much less energy and time than pushing furniture and equipment around the room in hopes of finding a place for everything!

* Even though setting up programs in shared space such as gyms and cafeterias can be especially challenging, it is still important to provide children with interest areas and activity choices. Remind participants that school-age children are capable of thinking creatively to help solve problems about how to use space effectively. They also enjoy having center "jobs" which allow them to help set up and take down equipment each day. This helps them feel capable, resourceful, responsible and reliable as they grow towards independence.

Answer Guide

There is no "boiler-plate" for creating a layout of interest centers for school-age child care programs. There are many ways to set up an effective room or center design, depending on the type of space available and the number of children to be served. However, certain basic guidelines can be used to evaluate the potential effectiveness of center designs regardless of where they are to be housed. These guidelines are listed below and are also included in the **Viewer's Guide** as guidelines for small group work in Step 7 of this exercise. Refer to these guidelines as you discuss and evaluate the plans developed by each group.

* Separate quiet areas from noisy areas, active areas from more passive areas.

* Store related items near each other (e.g. art supplies in the art area, food items near the snack area, pet supplies near the nature area)

* Use furniture and equipment in ways that will help define the space, rather than lining up everything against the wall.

* Locate areas needing water or electricity near sources of supply.

* Find ways to give the center a comfortable atmosphere (create cozy areas with bean bag chairs, large pillows, small rugs or carpet squares)

Additional Suggestions

Extensions of This Exercise

Five Extensions of This Exercise are listed in the **Viewer's Guide.** Depending on the amount of time available for training, you may wish to incorporate some of them in your training session as a follow-up to **Exercise 2 A.** A capsule of the content of each Extension and estimates of the time required to conduct them in a workshop are listed below. If time is not available to conduct the Extensions, refer participants to this section of the **Viewer's Guide.** Encourage participants to use these follow up activities as the basis for in-service training in their communities or as a focus for discussion with colleagues and supervisors.

1. Working in the same groups used for **Exercise 2 A,** participants make a list of ten activities which could take place in one of the interest areas their group developed. Groups may want to consult references listed in the **Viewer's Guide** as a resource. Be sure to have them available. For each activity on the list, groups should answer the following questions:

   * What is the purpose of the activity? How will school-age children benefit from the activity?
   * Is the activity appropriate in view of the developmental needs of school-age children?
   * What additional furniture, equipment, or supplies will be needed, if any?

   Time Needed. Allow about 20 minutes for small group work. Then reconvene the larger group for discussion of the activities planned by each group. Allow 20 to 30 minutes for sharing.

Trainer Tip. During discussion, point out that it is important to have a clear purpose in mind when planning program activities to interest and benefit school-age children. Avoid activities which are nothing but "busy work". School-age children are industrious and like to be busy, but they want to do things that really interest them.

2. Remaining in the large group, participants discuss ways misbehaviors in school-age programs might be the result of a mismatch between the **needs** of the children and the quality of the environment.

   Time Needed. Allow about 15 minutes to discuss this idea.

   Trainer Tip. During discussion, generate examples of how a poor child care environment might cause conflicts and behavior problems (e.g. if the block area is too close to traffic patterns, children may accidentally bump into construction projects, causing children who have worked hard on their projects to become frustrated and angry.) Also, refer back to the concepts presented in **Module One** which stressed the importance of designing programs with the characteristic and individual needs of children in mind.

3. Working in small groups, participants use the lists of furniture, equipment, and supplies for interest areas which are presented in Half a Childhood--Time for School-Age Child Care and Activities for School-Age Child Care (see **Resource Listing** at the end of the **Trainer's Guide**) to develop additional interest areas.

   Time Needed. Allow 15 to 30 minutes for small group work, depending on the number of additional interest areas the groups are asked to develop. Suggested number of areas to develop: 1 or 2. Allow 20 to 30 minutes for sharing.

   Trainer Tip. Encourage participants to think beyond the traditional interest areas. For example, how about a dramatic play corner transformed into a recording studio? A science area with supplies for inventing new household gadgets? A global connections area in the quiet corner, complete with addresses of international pen pal organizations, and posters, magazines, and books about other countries?

4. Working in small groups, participants develop a layout illustrating how **outdoor** space could be used effectively, complete with outdoor interest areas.

Time Needed. Allow about 45 minutes for small group work and about 30 minutes for sharing.

Trainer Tip. To introduce this activity, remind participants that interest areas aren't just for indoors. Also encourage participants to think about indoor activities such as arts and crafts, science experiments, card games, etc., that could be adapted for use outside. Have participants use the same process they used for planning the layout for indoor space in Exercise 2 A.

5. Remaining in the large group, participants brainstorm ways to make it possible for children to participate in the creation and maintenance of the center environment.

Time Needed. Allow about 10 to 15 minutes for brainstorming.

Trainer Tip. To introduce the brainstorming session, remind participants that school-age children want and need to have a say in shaping the world around them. Successful programs solicit children's ideas and encourage them to be involved in setting up and taking care of the center. Some of the ideas that may come up during brainstorming are: have regular planning meetings involving children, interview children to learn more about their interests, have a center suggestion box for children, have children sign up for center "jobs" each week, ask children open ended questions like--"If you were the director of the program, what activities would you do that we don't do now?" There are many other possibilities.

Independent Learning Suggestions

The core exercise and many of extensions of the core exercise can all be done independently if time for workshop sessions is not available. If you suggest that participants do some of these exercises on their own, it is a good idea to encourage them to share their work with a colleague or supervisor. Those who work directly with children should remember to invite children to contribute their ideas and help on designing interest areas for their center.

Exercise 2 B: Developing Clubs Around Interest Areas

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (Several for each group)
Chart Paper (At least 3 sheets for each group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)
Center Floor Plan Developed in **Exercise 2 A**

Time Needed

30 to 45 minutes for small group work
30 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction to this exercise:

The purpose of this small group exercise is to help participants learn about the importance of providing interest clubs in school-age programs. It is also designed to help participants learn how to develop interest clubs.

School-age children love to participate in club activities. Through clubs they have opportunities to develop social skills as they work in small groups. Clubs also provide children with opportunities to explore new interests and develop competencies which are useful at home, at school, and in the community. Sometimes clubs provide children with an introduction to activities that become life-long interests, hobbies, and vocations. School-age programs should provide a wide array of clubs to enrich children's experiences at the center.

For this exercise, participants should work in the same small groups that were established for **Exercise 2 A.** They will further develop the interest areas they designed in **Exercise 2 A** by developing clubs that could take place in these areas. Before dividing into groups, direct attention to the Instructions for the exercise in the **Viewer's Guide.** Point out that this is a role play exercise which requires participants to pretend they are school-age children again. Emphasize that participants should stay in their roles as "children" throughout the small group portion of the exercise. The assignment for each group is to develop plans for three clubs around the identified interests of the "children" in the group. The 4th item of the instructions provides specific guidelines for defining and developing the clubs. Refer each group to the floor plan for interest areas they developed in the previous exercise. Distribute several magic markers and at least 3 sheets of chart paper for groups to use in summarizing plans for each club.

After about 30 minutes, tell groups they will have about 15 more minutes to complete their club plans. Remind participants to think about the question in Item 5 which asks groups whether they have accommodated the interests of all the "children" in the clubs they planned. Then reconvene the larger group and have groups share and compare their club plans. Allow about 30 minutes for sharing.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Be sure to discuss Item 5 which asks participants whether they were able to respond to the interests of all the "children" within three clubs? If small groups were not able to do this, ask the larger group for suggestions as to how the clubs might be adapted or expanded.

* Point out that there are many ways for children to be involved in clubs (e.g. depending on their skills, abilities, and interests, children might enjoy planning, organizing, participating in, or leading club activities).

Answer Guide

Because this exercise is based on the interests of the "children" involved, there are no right or wrong answers.

Additional Suggestions

Extension of This Exercise and Independent Learning Suggestions

The **Viewer's Guide** encourages participants to plan additional clubs with colleagues and school-age children by using the ideas for club-related ideas presented in the **Supplementary** Readings section of the **Viewer's** and **Trainer's Guides.**

Exercise 2 C: Developing a Schedule Which Reflects the Needs of School-Age Children

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (1 per group)
Chart Paper (1 or 2 sheets per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)
Center Floor Plan Developed in **Exercise 2 A**
Club Plan Developed in **Exercise 2 B**

Time Needed

45 minutes to 1 hour for small group work
30 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants understand the relationship between space, activities offered, and the program schedule. A well designed schedule allows staff to provide a program that offers diversity and choice in a well organized, yet flexible environment. To plan a workable schedule, staff must consider the program's staff to child ratio, the type of space available, the layout of the space (floor plan of interest and functional centers), and the kinds of activities that will take place. When schedules are well designed, they help all these elements of the program to function harmoniously.

In this exercise, participants should work in the same small groups established for **Exercises 2 A** and **2 B**. During small group work they should develop an <u>after school</u> program schedule which

complements the floor plan and club plans developed in the earlier exercises. Before dividing into groups, go over the Instructions for this exercise in the **Viewer's Guide**. The exercise asks participants to begin by reviewing the floor plans and club plans developed in the first two exercises and list any other activities they think should be offered that are not reflected in their plans. Next, participants are to select a realistic program staff/child ratio. If all participants in some groups are already working together in programs, encourage them to use the staff/child ratios established for their program, even if the ratio is higher than is usually recommended to support quality care (e.g. 1:20). This will allow participants to work on developing a schedule which they can use in the "real world". If participants do not work in the same programs or are in the process of planning a program, encourage them to select a staff/child ratio between 1:8 and 1:15, with a minimum of two staff available at all times (for safety reasons) even if fewer than eight children are in attendance.

Remind groups to consider the varying developmental and individual needs of children as they develop their schedules. The goal is to create a schedule which is **organized to support diversity and choice.** Review the following characteristics of quality characteristics of schedules in quality programs which are highlighted in the video and listed in the Instructions for the exercise:

* They are paced to meet the needs of school-age children.
* They balance time for quiet and active periods.
* They allow for changes in plans.
* They allow for simultaneous diverse activities.
* They allow for smooth transitions from one activity to another and before and after routines such as arrival and dismissal, snacks, etc.

Tell groups that the schedule they develop should address the following issues which are listed in the exercise:

* **what** activities will happen
* **where** activities will happen
* **when** activities will happen
* **who** will be responsible for activities that are taking place at each time and each place

Distribute a magic marker and 1 or 2 sheets of chart paper for groups to use for posting their schedules. Refer groups to their floor plans and club plans as they begin to work. Circulate among the groups as they do their planning. Remind them, if appropriate, that everything on the schedule doesn't have to

start and stop at the same time; schedules may have overlapping time frames which allow some activities to continue while others close and new ones start.

After about 45 minutes, tell groups they will have about 15 more minutes to complete their schedules. Then reconvene the larger group and have groups share and compare their schedules. Allow about 30 minutes for sharing.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Stress the importance of planning a schedule where everyone does not have to do the same thing at the same time. As indicated in earlier exercises, children should be able to choose from among a wide variety of different types of activities at any given point in time. Schedules that require everyone to play an active game at the **same time**, rest at the **same time**, do homework at the **same time**, or do a science or art project at the **same time** are not responsive to the diverse developmental needs of school-age children.

* Stress the importance of indicating **who** will be responsible for activities that are taking place at each time and each place. Point out that in some cases, older children with skills to share might be capable of taking on the responsibility of leading an activity, providing all safety considerations are met. Children should not be given responsibility for leading activities that require supervision of potentially dangerous materials or equipment (e.g. hot oil for cooking) or supervision of physical activities requiring close skilled oversight and assistance such as gymnastics, tumbling, or swimming.

* Remind participants that a schedule should include all program components requiring time--not just times for activities. A schedule should also reflect time required for setting up the environment if needed, time for setting up the equipment and supplies for an activity or snacks, and time for cleaning up.

* Discuss the importance of creating schedules that do not require children to wait for the next activity or event to begin. When children have to spend time waiting for things to begin, they become bored, disinterested, and frustrated--these feelings are breeding grounds for misbehavior and conflicts among children. Interest areas and or transitional short-term activities (e.g. looking at a book

or magazine, listening to a tape, singing songs) should be available when some children finish activities before others. Transitional times and places should be reflected in the schedule.

Answer Guide

There are many ways to design an effective schedule, depending on the size of the group, the staff available, the available space and equipment, the floor plan, and the planned activities. Use the criteria highlighted in the video to evaluate the effectiveness of the schedules planned by each group.

Additional Suggestions

Extensions of This Exercise

There are two Extensions of This Exercise suggested in the **Viewer's Guide:**

1. Working in small groups, participants plan a before school schedule, following the same general procedures that were given in the Instructions for **Exercise 2 C.** Before dividing into groups, direct participants' attention to the two additional considerations presented in the extension exercise:

   * What varying developmental and individual needs of children should be considered as you plan the before school schedule?

   * Should before school activities be different from after school activities? If yes, what are the differences? How will these differences affect the schedule?

   Time Needed. Allow about 45 minutes for small group work and about 30 minutes for sharing.

   Trainer Tip. During discussion of the additional considerations presented in the exercise, bring out the following points:

   * Some children may be slow starters in the morning. The program schedule should be flexible enough to allow children to start the day in a way which is compatible

with their different "internal clocks" (e.g. Some children may need extra time to wake up and get moving; others may be ready to go as soon as they arrive. The schedule should be designed to accommodate both characteristics.)

* Before school programs serve as a transition point between home and school. Some children may want a little time to look over their homework assignments. Younger children may need extra attention to help them adjust when their parents drop them off and to help them get ready to leave when it's time for school. Although physical activity may be needed by some of the children, it is best to avoid sports and games that may cause children to become to "revved up" or over-excited before the school day begins. When physical activities are part of the before school program, staff should allow sufficient time in the schedule for children to cool off and calm down before going down the hall to class or getting on a bus for the ride to school. A good before school schedule should address these and other transitional needs.

* Programs may want to schedule time for breakfast. Some programs arrange to have breakfast components to serve low income families or to provide extra support for parents and children who may be rushed in the morning. In some cases food is supplied by the program through subsidies from the United States Department of Agriculture Food Program. In some cases, regulations allow parents to send in cereal and other breakfast foods for their children; programs provide milk and juice to supplement foods provided by parents.

* Because before school programs are usually shorter in duration than after school programs, it is best to avoid scheduling long term, complex activities. Time should be available for children to participate in short term activities like cards, reading magazines, chatting with friends. It is possible, however, to schedule some types of activities in the morning which can be continued in the afternoon by the same children (e.g. mixing a batch of cookies to bake later, putting the first coat of paint on an art project which will be completed in the afternoon, conducting the first round of a Checker's tournament).

2. Remaining in the larger group, participants discuss how schedules for full day programs might differ from before and after school schedules.

   Time Needed. Allow about 20 minutes for this discussion.

   Trainer Tip. Refer to Half a Childhood and School-Age Ideas and Activities (see **Resource Listing** at the end of the **Trainer's Guide**) for examples of full day schedules. During discussion, bring out the following points:

   * Full day schedules should be planned to include both short term and long term activities. Longer blocks of time should be provided for older children to work on long term projects and hobbies on their own and in small groups. Several short term activities might be provided for younger children during the same block of time.

   * Though flexibility is important, schedules for full days should include times for regular checkpoints and routines to give children a sense of security and continuity throughout the day.

   * Full day schedules should include increased time for field trips away from the center and special events at the center (e.g. performances, demonstrations, visits by people in the community with talents and skills to share, community improvement projects like planting a garden or making a wall hanging for a community building, plays and festivities planned by the children, meal preparation and cooking projects like baking bread, etc.). Before and after school programs often do not have sufficient time to schedule many long term activities which are of interest to school-age children.

Independent Learning Suggestions

The **Viewer's Guide** encourages participants currently working in a school-age program to use the guidelines provided in **Exercise 2 C** to design a schedule which increases opportunities for diversity and choice for the children they serve.

Exercise 2 D: Using Appropriate Staff Roles to Manage Center Activities and Events

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (1 for each group)
Pencils (1 per participant)
Chart Paper (1 sheet for each group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

30 minutes for small group work

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants understand that staff in school-age programs need to play many different roles as they work with children. In quality programs, staff are comfortable playing many different roles--leader, facilitator, helper participant, problem solver, mediator, observer, listener, collaborator, role model.

Before dividing into groups, review the Instructions for this exercise in the **Viewer's Guide.** Point out that participants are to work on their own for the first part of the exercise, using the **Staff Role Inventory** form which follows the Instructions. In the space provided after each role on the inventory, participants should list the activities, events, and situations which they feel could be handled effectively and appropriately by using this role. Direct participants to the **Example** which shows how staff might assume the role of **Participant** during various activities, events, and situation. Encourage participants to list as many examples as they can. Distribute pencils for individual work,

chart paper, and a magic marker to each group. Tell groups to allow about 10 minutes for members to work on their own. After ten minutes, the group should discuss the ideas of each group member, considering the reasoning behind the matches selected between various roles and activities, events, and situations. After 15 minutes of discussion, groups should consolidate their ideas and post a master list reflecting these ideas on chart paper.

After about 30 minutes, reconvene the larger group and have groups share and compare their lists.

Summary of Teaching Points

During discussion, make the following observations:

* Many different roles could be used for the same activity or event; there is not necessarily a "right" role to play. What is important to remember is that staff **have a choice** about the roles they will play. And the choices they make will influence the tone of the center and how children feel about the program. To be most effective, staff should decide what is the most important role to play during the activity, basing the choice on the needs, interests, and abilities of the children; the interests and abilities of the staff member; the situation (e.g. will safety or health issues affect the role to be played?), the time of day, the space and facilities available, and what other staff may be doing at the time. This requires keen observation skills, advance planning, and organization.

* The ability to play many different roles effectively takes practice and experience. One way to develop the skills needed for a particular role is to concentrate on that role during a portion of the program day for several weeks. For example, a staff member who wants to become more skilled at playing the role of **facilitator** might choose or be assigned to play that role for at least 30 minutes every day during free play time. During this period, the staff member could focus on facilitating activities such as:

  - helping children choose activities,
  - noticing when children are bored or ready for a change and directing them to a new activity,
  - showing children how to get started on a project or activity,

- asking children open-ended questions to help them build on ideas and interests, and
- anticipating potential conflicts between children and re-directing them before problems occur.

By concentrating on and practicing each role, staff members gain skills and confidence. Supervisors and co-workers can be helpful as staff members work on skills by observing and sharing their observations and suggestions.

* Each role requires certain skills in order to play it well. As part of the discussion, ask participants to identify some of the skills required to play the other roles effectively.

Answer Guide

As groups share their master lists matching roles to activities, events and situations, refer to the **Example** of the **Participant** role provided in the Instructions to guide the discussion. Two examples of other possible matches between roles and center activities appear below. As a trainer, you may want to identify in advance some of the skills associated with other roles on the inventory list and develop similar lists of activities for these roles.

Example: Collaborators help people work together cooperatively and effectively. They not only participate in what is going on, they assume responsibility for making things go well--for making everyone feel like a winner. They assume some leadership for creating situations where those involved feel good about what is happening because their needs, ideas, and concerns are considered and included in some way. Staff might play the role of **Collaborator** during activities, events, and situations such as:

- a brainstorming session to think of ways the center could be improved
- a planning session to organize center tournaments, fiestas, or other special events
- a project to build sets or create costumes for a play
- a rule making session
- a song writing or story telling activity
- a science experiment
- a planning session to design a mural for the center or for a school or community building
- a cooking project
- a planning session to develop ideas for a center newsletter

Example: **Listeners** make an effort to tune in to the concerns, interests, and ideas of others. They use this information to help them be more thoughtful of and responsive to others. They try to stay calm and collected and keep an open mind. They make efforts to find out what a person is trying to communicate by taking the time to listen without interrupting, by asking questions that will help clarify what the person is saying, by giving useful feedback when the person is finished talking, and by acknowledging the person's feelings even if the feelings expressed are hostile, impolite, or angry. Good **Listeners** give people their full attention; they do not try to do other activities or think about other problems when they are in the role of **Listener**. Staff might play the role of listener during center activities, events, and situations such as:

- A group of children are talking about what they like to do on weekends.
- A child says he wishes he didn't have to attend the program.
- A group of older children say they are bored.
- A child says the other children at school don't like her.
- A group of children are talking about homeless people and wish they could do something to help.
- Several children say they don't get enough to eat at snack.
- A group of children say they want to start a Karate club.
- A child is singing by himself in the quiet corner.
- Two "best friends" are saying they hate each other and never want to play together again.
- A child comes to the program each day looking lonely and afraid.

Additional Suggestions

Independent Learning Suggestions

As a follow-up to this exercise, the **Viewer's Guide** suggests two sets of Independent Learning Activities. Review these activities with participants and encourage them to do them on their own. **Set One** is intended for participants who are currently working with children in a school-age program. Two of these activities encourage participants to improve their abilities to play different roles through self observation and by soliciting comments about the way they play different roles from a supervisor or colleague. The final activity asks participants to think of one club, one activity, and one interest area they would like to add to their center and then decide what role they would use to carry out the project.

Set Two is designed for people who are not working directly with children in a school-age program. It provides suggestions for conducting a site observation to learn more about the roles staff play in school-age programs. It also includes suggestions for sharing observations with staff and helping staff learn more about how to use different roles to improve their programs.

Exercise 2 E: Sharing Staff Interests and Skills with School-Age Children

Trainer Notes

Resources

Paper (Several sheets per participant)
Pencils (1 per participant)
Magic Markers (1 per participant)
Chart Paper (1 sheet per participant)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

30 to 45 minutes for individual work
15 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants recognize the importance of adults' sharing interests and skills with school-age children. Sharing and caring go together naturally! This exercise is especially useful for participants who are or will be working directly with children on a regular basis. However, it is also suitable for other participants who may be program directors or community advocates. School-age children enjoy learning new skills or hobbies from adults whether the adults are their primary caregivers or visitors to the program. In fact, one enjoyable way for supervisors and community advocates to observe a program is to bring along an idea, skill, interest, or other activity to share. This makes the visit more informal and enjoyable for everyone.

This exercise is designed for independent learning; participants work on their own as individuals rather than in small groups. Review the following Instructions for this exercise which appear in the **Viewer's Guide**.

1. Think of a special interest, hobby, skill, or other activity you would like to share with school-age children.
2. Decide the best format for sharing it (e.g. Ongoing Club or Interest Area? Game? Presentation or Performance? One Day Special Event or Project? Etc.)
3. Using the ideas and information presented in Module Two, develop an outline of a plan for sharing your interest with the children.
4. Transfer your notes to chart paper.

Distribute paper, pencils, chart paper and a magic marker to each participant. Circulate to answer questions and make suggestions as needed as participants develop their plans. After about 30 minutes, ask participants to finish up and transfer their plans to the chart paper during the next 15 minutes. When everyone is finished, reconvene the larger group. Allow about 30 minutes for group discussion and sharing.

Trainer Tips:

* If time is limited for sharing, have participants share their plans by posting them around the room. Participants can look over the plans during a workshop break or lunch period. After everyone has had a chance to see the plans, take a few minutes to summarize the activity using the teaching points in the next section.

* If no time is available for this exercise, encourage participants to complete it as a homework assignment to share at the next workshop session. If participants will not be returning for another session, encourage them to complete the exercise and share their ideas with a colleague or supervisor.

* Whether the exercise is done in a workshop setting or as a follow-up to training, encourage participants to share their ideas and plan in an actual school-age program.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Though it might not be obvious at first, everyone has some personal skill, talent, or hobby that could be shared with children in a school-age program. Once the special interest is identified, it is important 1) to determine whether it is appropriate for sharing with school-age children in a group setting, and 2) if it is appropriate, to think through the

best way to present it to the children in view of their developmental needs and characteristics.

* School-age children are interested in developing positive relationships with adults. One of the most effective ways to develop positive relationships is to share an idea, a skill, an interest, or hobby.

* It can be very rewarding for adults to share skills, talents, and interests with school-age children. When sharing is carefully planned and carried out, school-age children respond with interest and enthusiasm. This kind of sharing opens doors for children and enriches their lives. It also helps staff members increase confidence in themselves as school-age professionals.

Answer Guide

Refer to **Summary of Teaching Points** above. Be sure to emphasize that it is important for adults to evaluate the appropriateness of sharing various talents, skills, and interests with school-age children. Note that some hobbies or skills might need to be adjusted and adapted in order to meet the developmental needs of the children being served. For example, someone whose hobby is weaving might want to offer a weaving club. It is important to recognize that school-age children may not have the small muscle skills or attention spans required to learn how to use complex table and floor looms. With this in mind, the club could introduce children to weaving through different types of hand-looms which would be much easier for them to prepare and use in learning various weaving techniques. Or children might be encouraged to use branches and vines from nature to create their own looms for weaving projects. Once children have learned some of the basic weaving skills, they could be introduced to more complex looms and techniques through a demonstration or visiting a craft museum.

Module Three Trainer Notes

Video Key #3:

Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs

Preview

To introduce this module to workshop participants, use the Module Preview Notes which appear on the next. page. (This **Preview** also appears in Module Three of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**) If time permits, conclude your introduction by showing the portion of the video focusing on Key #3: **Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs.** Then proceed with the exercises you have chosen to include, using the **Trainer Notes** on the following pages.

Exercises Included in This Module

Exercise 3 A: **Accepting** Parents as Partners

Exercise 3 B: **Assessing** the Needs of Parents

Exercise 3 C: **Accommodating** the Needs and Interests of Parents

Exercise 3 D: Building an **Alliance** with Parents of School-Age Children

Preparation Notes

Check the **Resources** listing at the beginning of each exercise to be sure you have all the materials and supplies needed.

Module Preview Notes

Strong, positive, cooperative relationships with parents are at the heart of quality programs for school-age children. Yet, these kinds of program/parent relationships are not always easy to achieve. Just as children have varying developmental and individual needs, so do parents. As the video illustrates, parents have different ideas, values, concerns, knowledge, pressures, lifestyles, plans, dreams, resources, and constraints. The one unifying theme among today's parents may be that many of them are stressed by the challenges of meeting their obligations in the workplace, while trying to build and maintain healthy relationships with the significant people in their personal lives. Some parents have more capacities and skills for handling this balancing act successfully than others. The extent to which parents feel that their lives are manageable and under some degree of control has a strong influence on the extent to which they are able and willing to get involved in their children's lives in the child care setting.

Quality programs make a genuine effort to understand and be supportive of parent concerns, problems, and stresses. They recognize that child care is a family service--that both parents and children are the clients or customers. They recognize that programs are not replacements for parents. Quality programs know that in order to succeed with children, they must constantly reach out to parents.

The video provides an overview of **The Four A's of Parent Involvement: 1) Acceptance, 2) Assessment, 3) Accommodation,** and **4) Alliance.** Programs which systematically address these **Four A's** have a much greater chance of increasing the level of parent interest and involvement in school-age programs. The exercises in this module are designed to help participants design a plan for parent involvement based on these **Four A's.**

Exercise 3 A: Accepting Parents as Partners

Trainer Notes

Resources

Exercise Instructions Only

Time Needed

30 to 45 minutes for small group work
20 to 30 minutes for large group discussion

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to help you develop your introduction to this exercise.

In order to work effectively with children, it is very important for school-age professionals to recognize and accept parents as partners with programs. The attitudes and opinions directors and caregivers have towards parents will have a strong affect on their ability to interact effectively with parents of children in their programs. Sometimes child care staff have opinions about parents which can make it difficult, if not impossible, to view parents as partners. As a first step toward developing good communication and positive relationships, it is important for caregivers to acknowledge their feelings about parents of school-age children and to discuss how these feelings can help or hinder their work with families.

Before breaking into small groups, review the Instructions for this exercise which appear in the Viewer's Guide. The Instructions ask participants to read the series of statements provided in the exercise and discuss how they feel about them with other members of their group. Point out that it is likely that participants will vary in their opinions about these statements. Have each group appoint one member to facilitate discussion of the statements, using the following discussion

questions. These questions also appear in the Viewer's Guide. Facilitators should summarize the participants' responses as each question is discussed. (Note: If there is not time for small group work or if the workshop has a small number of participants, trainers should assume the role of facilitator and conduct the discussion as a whole group exercise.)

Discussion Questions:

1. Which statements do members of your group disagree on? What accounts for any disagreements?

2. Are there any statements on which there is unanimous agreement? If yes, what accounts for this?

3. Identify any statements which members of the group have very strong opinions about. Then, discuss how these opinions might have an impact on a center's ability to develop a partnership with parents. For example:

   - Will any of the opinions enhance efforts to get parents involved? If so, how?
   - Will any of the opinions hinder efforts to get parents involved? If so, how?

4. During discussion, did members of the group change their minds about their initial reactions to any of the statements? If yes, what accounted for the change?

5. Because we're all human, both parents and school-age professionals have values, beliefs, concerns, and traditions which influence our attitudes and color the way we look at each other. When attitudes get in the way of professional behavior, however, the situation usually goes from bad to worse. What can you do to cope with attitudes that may make it difficult to do your job effectively?

After about 35 minutes, ask facilitators to wrap up their small group discussions in the next 10 minutes. Then reconvene the larger group and ask facilitators to summarize the small group discussions. Compare the attitudes and opinions expressed by the different groups.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Attitudes about parents can help or hinder the development of partnerships with parents. For example, school-age staff

who feel parents just want to "dump children in a day care center and forget about them" are not likely to make efforts to get parents involved--they've already decided parents aren't interested. On the other hand, staff who feel parents "have lots of good ideas about how a child care center should be run" are likely to solicit parents' suggestions, ideas, and concerns as a resource for improving the program.

* It is important to acknowledge that all of us have values, beliefs, concerns, and tradition which influence our attitudes towards one another. School-age professionals must be willing to examine their attitudes and work to adjust those which hinder their ability to work effectively with parents.

Answer Guide

Most people have strong attachments to their attitudes and values. Although it can be very difficult to determine which attitudes are **"right"** and which are **"wrong"**, encourage participants to recognize that attitudes and opinions can either **help** or **hinder** their work with parents. It is useful to recognize both kinds of attitudes. And, it's important to work on checking or changing those attitudes which get in the way of establishing positive relationships with parents.

Additional Suggestions

<u>Independent Learning Suggestion.</u>

If this exercise is not conducted as part of a workshop, the **Viewer's Guide** encourages school-age professionals to discuss the statements and questions in the exercise with a trusted colleague or supervisor. It can be very difficult for people to see clearly how their attitudes influence their interactions with others. By discussing our attitudes with other professionals, we can gain insights about opinions which may need to be adjusted if we want to be more effective in our work.

Exercise 3 B: Assessing the Needs of Parents

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

20 minutes for small group work
20 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants recognize the wide variety of interests, concerns, and needs among parents. The experience of being a parent varies from person to person and may be influenced by family and cultural background and traditions, stresses and pressures in the work place, values and beliefs about parenthood, educational background, their children's temperament and behavioral style, and many other factors. In order to develop successful partnerships with parents, programs must assess the individual and group interests and needs of parents in their communities. This assessment can then be used as the basis for planning parent involvement activities.

For this exercise, participants work in small groups to assess the needs of parents of school-age children in their communities, using the following discussion questions. These questions also appear in the Instructions of the Viewer's Guide. Before

breaking into groups, review the questions with participants. Provide each group with a magic marker and several sheets of chart paper to record their answers to the discussion questions. (Note: If there is not time for small group work or if the workshop has a small number of participants, trainers should conduct the discussion as a whole group exercise).

Discussion Questions:

1. What individual and group interests and needs are common to parents in your community/communities?

2. What stresses, pressures, problems, or constraints face many parents in your community/communities?

3. How much time do most parents in your community/communities have to be involved in the school-age program? From your perspective, do most parents have quite a bit of time? A moderate amount of time? Almost no time to get involved? Does the amount of time parents have vary from parent to parent? If yes, what are some of the factors that contribute to this difference among them? What would be the best time(s) of the day, week, or year for parents in your community to become involved?

4. What special knowledge, talents, and abilities do parents in your community possess? Would parents be willing to share their talents and other resources with the school-age program?

After about 20 minutes, reconvene the larger group and share and compare the way participant's in different groups assess the needs and interests of parents in their communities.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Parental needs, interests, and concerns vary from person to person and are influenced by many different factors.

* Parents in different communities may share certain interests, concerns, problems, needs, or constraints. Examples: In some communities, the lack of public transportation in low income neighborhoods could make it difficult for parents to come to evening parent meetings or special programs. Parents in a community with lots of swimming pools or beaches may be interested in having their children learn about water safety and how to swim as part of

the program. Parents in a high crime area may be especially concerned about security precautions at the school-age center. Be sure to discuss the implications of commonalities among parents brought up by participants in different groups.

* For many legitimate reasons, parents differ in the amount of time they have available to participate in school-age programs.

* Many parents have special knowledge, talents, and abilities. School-age programs can often be enriched by inviting parents to share these resources with children. Examples: Parents may be willing to visit the center to cook a special snack or festive meal, build a birdhouse, or hold a bicycle repair clinic. Parents who find it difficult to visit the center may be willing to repair broken toys at home or create an artistic display of photographs from a recent field trip for the center bulletin board.

Answer Guide

There are no right or wrong answers to this exercise. However, in guiding the discussion of assessing the needs of parents, stress importance of remembering that parents--like children--are different from one another. Successful partnerships with parents are respectful of these differences.

Additional Suggestions

Extension of This Exercise

The Extension of This Exercise suggested in the **Viewer's Guide** uses a role play format to help participants sharpen their perspectives on what parents want from school-age programs. Working in small groups, each participant is to assume the role of a parent of a child between the ages of 5 and 12. The "parents" are to hold a group discussion by completing the following statement with as many answers as come to mind:

"I want a school-age program to....."

Examples of ways "parents" might complete the statement are: "help my child with his homework", teach my child some manners" or "keep my child out of trouble." Encourage "parents" to think

of every aspect of school-age programming and come up with as many "parent" wants as possible. Provide each group with a magic marker and 1 or 2 sheets of chart paper for listing their responses.

Time Needed. Allow about 15 minutes for small group work. Then reconvene the larger group and share the responses of each group of "parents." Allow about 15 minutes for sharing.

Trainer Tips. Stress that this is a role play activity. Circulate during small group discussion to remind participants they are to talk **like a parent** throughout the discussion. If participants begin by saying things like: "Well, what I **think** parents want from a child care program is.....", they will be seeing things from the perspective of a school-age professional--not from a parent's perspective. The purpose of this exercise is to think like parent--to walk in their shoes for a few moments. The more participants talk like parents, the more authentic their role play responses will be. When groups have completed their lists, use the following questions to guide the follow up discussion. (These questions also appear in the Viewer's Guide.)

1. Which items on the list would be easy to accommodate?
2. Which items on the list would be difficult to accommodate?
3. What are the barriers to accommodating various items on the list? What are some things you could do to overcome these barriers?
4. Do some items on the list conflict with what children might want? What school personnel might want? What school-age professionals might want? What could be done to resolve these conflicts.

As participants discuss some of the potential barriers and conflicts, emphasize that difficult problems and conflicts can often be resolved by using problem solving techniques which help find solutions and answers that will be acceptable to people with conflicting wants, needs, and desires. The following problem solving technique can be used to resolve difficult situations so that everybody wins. Encourage participants to apply this technique to solving some of the barriers and problems that surface during discussion of this exercise.

* Stop and think about all the aspects of the problem.
* Brainstorm a list of all the possible solutions; stretch your imagination to include solutions that might provide a different way of looking at the problem.
* Evaluate the possible solutions.
* Make a plan for implementing one or more solutions.
* Set a time to check to see if the solution(s) work. Make adjustments and changes if necessary.

Independent Learning Suggestions

Two Independent Learning Suggestions are included in the Viewer's Guide as a follow-up to **Exercise 3 B** and the Extension.

1. This activity asks participants to use the information in the video and the questions in **Exercise 3 B** to design a parent survey form to use in assessing the needs of parents in their community or school-age program. The form should be designed to find out as much as possible about the parents' needs and interests. At the same time, it should be brief and easy to read.

   Trainer Tip. If time permits, you may want to adapt this activity and incorporate it as part of the training session. Participants could complete the task as individuals or as a small group project. In either case, allow about 20 minutes for designing the form. Provide participants with magic markers and chart paper for illustrating their forms. Then reconvene the larger group and allow an additional 20 minutes for sharing and comparing.

2. The second Independent Learning Suggestion points out that it can sometimes be difficult to get parents to complete written surveys. First, participants are asked to think about some of the reasons behind this (e.g. lack of time, lack of reading or writing ability). Next, they are encouraged to think about some alternatives to written surveys for collecting information about parents' needs and interests.

   Trainer Tip. If time permits, you may want to devote 10 or 15 minutes of the training session to discussing this issue. Some of the alternatives to written surveys that might be suggested are:

* informal daily conversations with parents.
* listening to what children say about their parents' interests, talents, and hobbies.
* telephone surveys.
* parent suggestion box.
* parent forums.
* informal "get acquainted" coffees, teas, etc.
* written surveys in languages other than English for parents who are not able to read and write in English.

Exercise 3 C: Accommodating the Needs and Interests of Parents

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Markers (1 or 2 per group)
Chart Paper (At least 7 sheets per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)
Assessment of Parent Needs and Interests Completed in **Exercise 3 B**

Time Needed

45 minutes for small group work
45 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants develop a parent involvement plan which **accommodates** the parent needs and interests identified in **Exercise 3 B.** (Participants should work in the same groups that were established for **Exercise 3 B**). Before breaking into groups, review the Instructions for this exercise which appear in the **Viewer's Guide.** Remind participants that parents are as diverse as children. Parent involvement is most successful when a program recognizes that all parents do not have to be involved in the same way. The video stresses this point in **Key #3.** Have groups develop a parent involvement plan which gives examples of the following types of parent involvement opportunities. (The different types of parent involvement opportunities also appear in the **Viewer's Guide.**) Provide each group with 1 or 2 magic markers and at least 7 sheets of chart

paper. Groups should print the title for each opportunity category at the top of one of the sheets of chart paper. Participants should list as many options as possible for providing opportunities related to each of the seven categories.

Categories for Parent Involvement.

1. Opportunities to Talk with Staff.
2. Opportunities to Receive Information.
3. Opportunities to Help Shape the Program.
4. Opportunities to Help Support the Program.
5. Opportunities to Participate in Activities at the Center.
6. Opportunities to Get to Know Other Parents and Children.
7. Opportunities to Network with Other Parents with Similar Problems and Concerns.

Allow about 45 minutes for small group work. Reconvene the larger group and have one group take the lead in posting and sharing its list of opportunities for parent involvement in each category. Then, have other groups post their lists and note the similarities and differences among the lists.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Quality programs recognize that parents, like children, have diverse needs and interests.
* Quality programs understand that all parents do not have to be involved in the same way.
* Quality programs provide a wide range of options for parent involvement in view of the diverse needs, concerns, interests, and stresses among parents.

Answer Guide

The following list provides **examples** of parent involvement opportunities for each category. Groups may list other examples.

Examples of Parent Involvement Opportunities:

1. Opportunities to Talk with Staff.

   * Informal conversations at arrival and dismissal time.
   * Telephone conversations to discuss a concern or special interest.
   * Formal conferences to discuss progress, problems, and or concerns.

2. Opportunities to Receive Information.

   * Regular program newsletters.
   * Occasional program memos.
   * Parent bulletin boards.
   * Open house meetings designed to provide news and information.

3. Opportunities to Help Shape the Program.

   * Parent advisory boards or panels.
   * Parent suggestion boxes.
   * Parent opinion surveys.

4. Opportunities to Help Support the Program.

   * Writing letters on behalf of the program to elected officials, board members, local newspapers, or community decision makers.
   * Assisting with fundraising efforts.
   * Contributing time or resources to enhance the program.

5. Opportunities to Participate in Activities at the Center.

   * Organizing and/or leading a special event or club.
   * Going along on a field trip.
   * Volunteering as an assistant for center activities on a regular or occasional basis.

6. Opportunities to Get to Know Other Parents and Children.

   * Attending center social events for families (pot luck dinners, roller skating parties, camping overnights).
   * Reading family bulletin boards with pictures of enrolled families and summaries of their interests, hobbies, etc.
   * Attending special programs or performances presented by the children.

7. Opportunities to Network with Other Parents with Similar Problems and Concerns.

   * Parent workshops and seminars.
   * Reader exchange columns in the center newsletter that make it possible for parents to learn about and contact other parents in order to solve problems or exchange services (e.g. weekend baby sitting, emergency transportation needs, etc.).
   * Clothing and toy exchange .

Additional Suggestions

If time is limited, suggest that participants complete Exercise 3 C on their own as described in the Independent Learning Suggestion in the Viewer's Guide.

Exercise 3 D: Building an **Alliance** with Parents of School-Age Children

Trainer Notes

Resources

Situations Included in the **Viewer's Guide** for **Exercise 3 D**

Time Needed

30 minutes for small group work
30 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop an introduction for this exercise.

This exercise is designed to emphasize that strong alliances with parents as resourceful partners are built by **accepting** parents, **assessing** their needs, and following through by **accommodating** these needs. Participants work in small groups to analyze a series of **Situations** presented in the **Viewer's Guide.** Encourage participants to use the problem solving techniques described earlier in this module as they discuss the questions posed at the end of each **Situation.** When breaking into groups, appoint one member of each group to act as a facilitator. As part of the small group discussion, the facilitator should help participants summarize their answers to the question at the end of each **Situation** before proceeding to the next **Situation.** After about 30 minutes, reconvene the larger group and have facilitators report the group solutions. Allow about 30 minutes for sharing.

Note: If time is limited, assign one or two **Situations** to each group and reduce the time allowed for group discussion from 30 minutes to 10 or 15 minutes.

Summary of Teaching Points

* Strong **alliances** with parents as resourceful partners are built by **accepting** parents, **assessing** their needs, and following through by **accommodating** these needs.

* Programs can often use parents' problems and concerns as an **opportunity** for building **alliances** with parents.

* It is important for school-age staff to develop and use **effective** communication and problem solving for building **alliances** with parents.

Answer Guide

There are many possible solutions to these **Situations**. Following are a few examples for each **Situation**. Most of the possible solutions should be used in combinations.

Situation One

Possible Solution(s):

- Invite parents to visit the center to observe or share family traditions and customs.
- Purchase program materials, equipment, and supplies that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children.
- Arrange to have the center newsletter printed in additional languages.
- Recruit staff or volunteers who can speak to the parents in their own language(s).

Situation Two

Possible Solution(s):

Talk with the parent about some of the potential difficulties that might arise if you become the special babysitter for one child in the program. **Then:**

- Help the parent locate community organizations and agencies who could provide assistance.
- Help the parent identify others in the neighborhood who might be interested in babysitting.
- Help the parent network with other parents in the center who might be interested in exchanging babysitting services.

Situation Three

Possible Solution(s):

- Encourage the grandmother to share more information about the difficulties the child is experiencing at home. Acknowledge these difficulties.
- Express your genuine concern(s) about the child's hygiene and behavior.
- Share information about the program's philosophy and discipline policies and procedures, making it clear that staff at the center cannot strike children. Invite the grandmother to help you come up with other ways to help the child gain self control.
- Offer to provide the grandmother with information about community resource people who might be able to provide assistance to the family.

Situation Four

Possible Solutions:

- Post a map at the center and help the child track his father's itinerary.
- Invite the father to send postcards directly to his son at the center.
- Invite the family to send in pictures the child can use to make a family poster or album to keep at the center.
- Invite the father to visit the center and talk about what it's like to be an airline pilot.
- Ask the father to help arrange a center field trip to the airport.

Situation Five

Possible Solutions:

- Provide parents with brochures, handbooks, regular newsletters and memos about the center--its philosophy, program of activities, policies and procedures.
- Post pictures of staff members along with short biographies of their education, interests, and skills on the parent bulletin board. Or, highlight the professional background of staff in the center newsletter.
- Encourage parents to visit the center at any time.
- Make a video of center activities and encourage parents to check it out for weekend viewing with their children.

Situation Six

- Write brief notes to the parents, highlighting their children's activities at the center.
- Ask the parents for a convenient time when you could call or visit with them briefly about their children's experiences. In the conversation, communicate your observation that parents seem pressured and rushed for time. Acknowledge the difficulties of balancing work and family demands. Ask if there are ways the center might help ease the pressure--e.g. consider organizing a breakfast club for children who may not have enough time to eat at home in the morning.
- Conduct a brief survey to determine whether parents would like to receive information or participate in workshops or seminars which offer help in balancing work and family pressures.
- Recognize that parents who don't have time to contribute to the center may be willing to get involved in other ways--e.g. donating unwanted materials or equipment from their places of employment which might enhance the center program (e.g. surplus sporting goods equipment, excess paper or other graphics supplies).

Additional Suggestions

Two Independent Learning Suggestions are included. Both activities focus on the importance of communicating effectively with parents in order to build strong alliances.

1. In the first activity, participants are directed to read the article **Keeping Parents Informed** which appears in the **Supplementary Readings** section of the **Viewer's** and **Trainer's Guides** and discuss following questions with colleagues or a supervisor. These questions also appear in the **Viewer's Guide.**

   * What skills do school-age professionals need in order to communicate effectively and form alliances with parents? (**Possible answers:** listening, observing, problem solving.)

   * What can school-age professionals do to improve their communication skills--particularly the skills needed in difficult situations? (**Possible answers:** role play difficult situations, observe colleagues with good communications skills, ask a trusted colleague or

supervisor to observe and critique communication skills, take a workshop or read a book on how to communicate effectively.)

* Why do you think it might be easier to talk about problems with parents if you have worked to build a relationship with them? (**Possible answers:** relationships help build trust, respect, and confidence among people--it is easier to discuss difficult issues with people one knows and trusts.)

* How do you think parent involvement differences from parent education? (**Possible answers:** Parent involvement is aimed at getting parents to participate in the program at some level. Parent education is aimed at helping parents learn about parenting skills; child development; the program's philosophy, goals, and objectives; and how parents and programs can work together to benefit children.) Can you think of ways a parent education program might help you develop stronger alliances with parents in your community or program? (**Possible answers:** Parents who know more about parenting issues, child development, and developmental programming are more likely to be appreciative and supportive of your efforts to provide quality services for school-age children.)

2. In the second activity participants are encouraged to develop a format for a brochure, newsletter or bulletin board which would be attractive and effective in communicating to parents in their communities. It is suggested that they invite a colleague, supervisor, and a **parent** to critique or comment on the design before the format is finalized.

Module Four Trainer Notes

Video Key #4:

Collaborating with Others Who Can Help

Preview

To introduce this module to workshop participants, use the content of the Module Preview Notes which appear on the next page. (This **Preview** also appears in Module Four of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals.**) If time permits, conclude your introduction by showing the portion of the video focusing on **Key #4: Collaborating with Others Who Can Help.** Then proceed with the exercises you have chosen to include, using the **Trainer Notes** on the following pages.

Exercises Included in This Module

Exercise 4 A: Looking at School-Age Care from the Perspective of Community Members

Exercise 4 B: Developing Community Resources to Enhance School-Age Programs

Preparation Notes

Check the **Resources** listing at the beginning of each exercise to be sure you have all the materials and supplies needed.

Module Preview Notes

Almost all school-age programs are housed in facilities which are owned and operated by another organization. Sometimes space is provided in elementary schools at no-cost or at a very low cost. In other cases, programs are located in facilities owned by churches, youth agencies, recreation centers, child care centers, or other community groups. In view of this, school-age professionals must develop the skills necessary to work cooperatively with others in contractual arrangements. They must develop a high level of sensitivity to the needs, concerns, and interests of those who provide them with space and services. They must also cultivate a spirit of creativity and flexibility. Above all, they need excellent communication skills. **Key #4** of the video highlights how important it is for school-age professionals to develop positive relationships with others who act as partners to school-age programs such as elementary school principals and support staff.

A second aspect of collaboration relates directly to the needs of school-age children. Connecting with community resources is very important to children. School-age programs must develop strategies for helping children learn about and participate in community activities. There are two major ways this can be done: 1) children can participate in field trips which allow them top explore community resources at museums, parks, recreation centers, business establishments, service organizations, etc., and 2) children can interact with people in the community who are willing to visit the center and share special talents, skills, and abilities. Either way, with resourcefulness and creativity, school-age professionals can develop collaborative relationships with many groups and individuals in the community who have resources to share with school-age children.

Exercise 4 A: Looking at School-Age Care from the Perspective of Community Members

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Marker (1 per group)
Chart Paper (1 sheet per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

20 to 30 minutes for small group work
15 to 20 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise.

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants recognize that community members, like school-age children and parents, have opinions about how school-age programs should be operated. This is especially true when the programs will be operated in community facilities. To collaborate effectively with members of the community, it's helpful to look at things from their point of view. This small group role play activity is designed to help participants look at school-age child care from the perspective of various community members. Before breaking into groups, review the Instructions for this exercise which appear in the **Viewer's Guide.** Participants in each small group should assume the roles of different community members who might be involved in providing some level of support for school-age child care. For example, one member might assume the role of a school principal, another might be the member of the school support staff (the secretary, janitor, or school nurse), another might be a classroom teacher at a school housing a program, another might

be a facility manager at a youth agency, recreation agency, or a church housing a program. Once roles are assigned, the small group should have a group discussion from the perspective of the community members in the group. During the discussion, each "community member" should complete the following statement with as many answers as come to mind:

"If a school-age center is housed in my facility, I want to be sure that....."

Participants might complete the statement with phrases such as "the staff has things under control", or, "the children won't be allowed to go wild". Provide each group with a magic marker and chart paper for listing their responses. Emphasize that this is a role play activity. Be sure each participant assumes the role of a community member. A participant choosing to play the role of a school principal who begins by saying things like "Well, I think school principals would be concerned about.....", will be seeing things from the perspective of a school-age professional, not from the perspective of the school principal. Participants should try to express themselves the way a school principal, school secretary, or agency director might do--the more they talk like community members, the more authentic their responses will be. After about 20 minutes of small group work, reconvene the larger group and have participants share and compare their lists of "wants". Discuss the following questions as you review the lists together (these questions also appear in the **Viewer's Guide**).

1. Which concerns on the list would be easy to address?
2. Which concerns on the list would be difficult to address
3. What are the barriers to coming to agreement about various concerns? What are some ways you could work to overcome these barriers?
4. Do some items on the list conflict with what children might want? What parents might want? What school-age professionals might want?

Refer to the **Summary of Teaching Points** to help you guide the discussion.

Summary of Teaching Points

During the discussion, be sure to highlight the following points:

* Sometimes community members express concerns about school-age programs which stem from a lack of knowledge about what

constitutes quality care and/or a lack of information about the child care organization which will operate the program--the capabilities of it's staff, how it will be organized, etc. When programs will be housed in schools or other community buildings, facility managers are often anxious about potential wear and tear on their buildings and have concerns about whether program staff will have the skills to manage the program safely and effectively. They may also want programs to provide activities which are developmentally appropriate for school-age children during out of school hours. For example, a facility manager may "want" the program to offer highly structured activities requiring children to do the same thing at the same time to ensure that children are "under control" and won't do damage to property or resources. Many of these concerns can be easily addressed through clear and frequent communication about the program's philosophy and goals and the plans, policies, and procedures which have been developed to support these goals and ensure smooth coordination with the facility which will house the program.

* Sometimes community members and program staff may have conflicting views about what should go on in school-age programs. For example, a school principal may want the program to emphasize homework and tutorial help after school. The program philosophy, however, may be based on the belief that the primary purpose of out of school programs is to help children relax, unwind, explore, and have a good time with friends after school. In order to resolve these kinds of conflicts, program staff must develop and use strong communication and problem solving skills. (Refer to the steps to effective problem solving presented in Module One--**Exercise 1 A, Summary of Teaching Points**).

* The more community members and facility managers know about the school-age program, the more likely they are to be supportive. It's important to use a variety of techniques (newsletters, flyers, special invitations to center events and activities, etc.) as tools for keeping key community players informed and in tune with the many ways the program addresses the needs of children and their families. With this in mind, program directors and staff members should develop and use good public relations skills and look for opportunities to publicize the program in community newspapers and on community radio and television stations.

Answer Guide

While there are no right or wrong answers to the role play exercise, here are some of the ways "community members" might complete the statement:

"If a school-age program is housed in my facility, I want to be sure that....."

* children are under control at all times.
* children will be able to do homework during the program.
* the program staff are well-organized and know how to plan activities that children will enjoy.
* the staff knows how to discipline children.
* the program will have procedures for keeping children safe and healthy.
* the staff will be capable of handling problems and emergencies without getting me or my staff involved.
* the program has its own supplies and won't use any of our supplies.
* the program has a philosophy that is similar to mine.
* the program rules will be consistent with the rules set for my program.
* it won't be noisy or disruptive to others who are working in the building.
* the parents appreciate using our facility.
* parents won't drop their children off for the program before program staff arrive and that they will pick children up on time.
* the program has sufficient resources and insurance to cover any damages to property or injuries to children and staff.

Additional Suggestions

Extensions of This Exercise

The **Viewer's Guide** includes the following three sets of discussion questions as Extensions of This Exercise.

1. School principals may have goals for school-age programs which are different than the goals of school-age professionals. Discuss the following questions with your group: What accounts for these different perspectives? What could you do as a school-age professional to bridge the gap between the goals of the principal and the goals of school-age professionals?

2. Most school-age programs are "guests" in someone else's facility. Discuss the following question with your group: As a school-age professional, what could you do to make yourself and your program a **welcome** guest?

3. One of the advantages of housing a school-age program in a school facility is that it can provide continuity for the child's day. However, very often, school staff see the child care program as "second class citizens". As a result, very little reciprocal communication takes place. Discuss the following questions with your group: What can school-age professionals do to "up-grade" the image of school-age programs in a school setting? What can school-age professionals do to encourage increased communication between school and child care staff?

   Time Needed. Allow about 15 to 20 minutes for small groups to discuss these questions. Then reconvene the larger group and compare and share responses. Allow about 15 minutes for sharing.

   Trainer Tips. There are many possible ways to build good relationships with facility managers. Encourage groups to think creatively as they brainstorm as many answers as possible to each question. During large group discussion, stress that strong collaborative relationships with facility managers and community members are built by using good communication, problem solving, and public relations skills. Program directors and staff must be constantly aware that in addition to providing quality programming, they must assume responsibility for publicizing the program to build a strong base of community support.

Independent Learning Suggestion

The Independent Learning Suggestion in the **Viewer's Guide** asks participants to generate a list of initiatives they could take to improve the image of school-age programs with school personnel and other community leaders. This is an **action assignment**; encourage participants to review their lists with a colleague or supervisor and implement one or two initiatives they agree could have the most positive impact on collaborative efforts as soon as possible.

Exercise 4 B: Developing Community Resources to Enhance School-Age Programs

Trainer Notes

Resources

Magic Marker (1 per group)
Chart Paper (1 sheet per group)
Masking Tape (Trainer)

Time Needed

30 to 40 minutes for small group work
15 to 20 minutes for sharing

Introducing the Exercise

Use the following information to develop your introduction for this exercise.

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants generate a list of community resources which could be expanded into ongoing clubs, interest areas, field trips, etc., to enhance school-age programs. School-age children are moving beyond home and family and want to be involved with others in their communities and in the larger world. With this in mind, school-age programs should develop ways to help school-age children connect with local and global community resources and activities at the center and away from the center.

Before breaking into groups, review the Instructions for this exercise which appear in the **Viewer's Guide**. Participants are asked to use the letters of the alphabet to help them get started in making a list of community resources (people and/or places) that could enhance and enrich school-age programs. For example, "A" resources might be the Aquarium or the Airport, "B" resources might be the Bowling Alley or Botanical Gardens. Groups are to

identify at least one resource for every letter of the alphabet. During brainstorming, groups should include all suggestions which come to mind. Items suggested should be posted on the first sheet of chart paper for reference later in the small group work. Once the lists are complete from "A" to "Z", participants should evaluate the resources on their lists and select five resources that children might like to visit and five resources that could be brought to the center. During the remainder of small group work, groups should brainstorm ways in which each of the ten resources they selected could be expanded into ongoing clubs, interest areas, field trips, etc. After about 30 minutes, ask groups to transfer their final lists of resources and ideas for expansion to the second sheet of chart paper and prepare to share their ideas with other groups. After about 10 more minutes, reconvene the larger group and compare and share the lists. Use the following **Summary of Teaching Points** to guide the discussion.

Summary of Teaching Points

* There are many ways for children to connect with local and community resources. A few examples are: planning visits and demonstrations at the center by local performers, professionals, technicians, etc.; taking field trips to places of interest; expanding on field trips with center clubs and special events; helping children write letters to individuals, groups, and organizations which interest them; providing children with books, magazines, newsletters, and bulletin boards which focus on local and global community issues, concerns, and resources; helping children organize projects and activities aimed at making their communities a better place to live.

* In choosing and developing community resources to enhance and enrich the program, it is important to survey the needs and interests of the children enrolled.

* School-age children have increased attention spans and thinking capacities. Because of this, they like to be involved in long term, ongoing projects and activities that help them develop skills and interests they can use in the "real world." When using community resources, programs should keep this in mind and plan activities and events which can be expanded through ongoing clubs and interest centers. For example, although a one-time demonstration by a local fitness expert might be interesting to children, the demonstration could be used as a spring board for setting up a nutrition and fitness interest center, launching an

ongoing nutrition and fitness club, working with the children to create a health and fitness bulletin board or a special kids health and fitness section in the center newsletter.

Answer Guide

There are hundreds of community resources in each community. The important thing to remember is that these resources must be **developed, adapted,** and **expanded** in ways which will enhance the program and match the interests and needs of children enrolled.

Additional Suggestions

Extensions of This Exercise

This section of the **Viewer's Guide** includes the following six ideas for developing community resources to enhance and enrich school-age programs. These Extension ideas are intended for participants to use in their programs and communities as a follow up to the training. Review these ideas with participants. Provide display copies of the resources listed for participants to examine. If time permits, you may wish to have participants begin work on one or more of these ideas during the training session.

1. School-age children care about problems in their communities and in the world beyond their communities. They want to reach out and take positive actions to help those who may be in need. Identify individuals, groups, or organizations in your community that could benefit from some type of help, attention, entertainment, or assistance from school-age children. An excellent resource for ways children can volunteer to help others in their communities is The Kids Can Help Book by Suzanne Logan. (See **Resource Listing** at the end of the **Trainer's Guide.**) It contains descriptions of many volunteer projects and organizations for school-age children. Review the ideas in this book. Then talk with school-age children about ways they would like to contribute to their communities.

2. School-age children also like to learn about and help solve problems that affect the world community. The Kids Can Help Book (see **Resource Listing**) contains ideas and a list of organizations and ideas for helping the planet and helping

people around the world. Share these ideas with school-age children in your program and work with them to develop projects or clubs related to world issues that concern them.

3. Help school-age children learn more about their communities through a community bulletin board at the center. Set up the bulletin board in the quiet area and post articles and information of interest to children clipped from community newspapers. Encourage children to contribute articles they read at home. Consider forming a special club where children can discuss the articles and follow up on issues, projects, or activities which interest them.

4. Consider subscribing to several children's magazines for the center. Magazines are an excellent way to introduce children to people, places, and activities that it might not be possible to bring into the center or visit on a field trip. Contact the librarian in the children's section of your local library. The librarian can show you several current publications which contain descriptions and reviews of children's magazines on a wide variety of topics--hobbies, nature, travel, fashion, photography, writing, etc. Write down addresses for the ones you think would interest the children you know. Send for sample copies from the publisher and share them with the children so they can help make decisions about which magazines to order.

5. School-age children like to learn about how other children live in other communities and in other parts of the world. Consider developing clubs such as:

   - A Pen Pal Club. Contact Around the World Friends, 550 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10036 for information.

   - A School-Age Child Care Partner Club. Talk with school-age children about other parts of your state or other areas that interest them. Then, contact a resource and referral agency in that area to locate school-age programs. Invite one or two centers to exchange information, ideas, and ongoing letters between interested children. If children select an area of your own state or city which isn't too far away, consider arranging an exchange field trip between centers.

6. School-age children enjoy learning how to do things well--to do things that help them feel competent and confident. With this interest in mind, Joan Bergstrom has collected information about contests school-age children can

participate in. In her book, All the Best Contests for Kids (see Resource Listing), she presents information about organizations across the country which sponsor contests for school-age children. She includes computer contests, writing contests, sports contests, sewing and cooking contests, photography contests and many, many others. This book can be used as a tool for help children connect with children around the country who have similar interests and talents. Share the book with children in a school-age program and help them write letters requesting information from organizations which sponsor contests that interest them. Then, consider forming a club around the contest(s) that children want to pursue.

Independent Learning Suggestion

Participants are encouraged to contact agencies in their communities which provide services for those in need and find out if school-age children could provide some type of help or assistance to these agencies. Participants who work with children in a school-age program should talk with them about community needs and develop an action plan for involvement.

Supplementary Readings and Worksheets

These supplementary readings and worksheets are designed to build on ideas presented in the four modules. Although these readings and worksheets can stand alone, they will be especially helpful if used as suggested in the modules.

PROGRAMMING THAT WORKS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

by Roberta L. Newman

Finding ways to get older elementary school children productively and happily involved in school-age child care programs is no small challenge. Children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades have growing needs for independence and responsibility that often seem difficult to respond to in a group setting. But by looking closely at the characteristics and needs of older children, it is possible to design programs that will keep them enthusiastically engaged.

Researchers at the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina[2] have identified seven developmental needs that should be considered in planning successful programs for older children. These needs often begin to emerge around age nine, when the child enters a rapid and often uneven period of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development. Here are some "hands on tips" for meeting these seven developmental needs through program activities in child care programs. A set of related **Management Tips** to help you implement each list of **Sample Activities.**

1. The Need for Physical Activity. Except for the period of infancy, early adolescence is the most rapid period of physical growth in childhood. These children need lots of opportunities to exercise their growing bodies.

Sample Activities

* "Pick-up" basketball, baseball, soccer, etc.
* Ping-pong
* Pool
* Co-operative games
* Fitness and Aerobics Clubs
* Dancing and Movement (Informal and formal)
* Skating

Management Tips

* When explaining games, rules, etc., keep discussion short and to the point. If more lengthy discussion is needed for a more

[2]The Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

complicated activity, break up the activity by alternating "talking time" with periods of physical movement.
* Allow for as much "hands on" work and physical movement as possible.

2. Need for Competence and Achievement. It is common for young adolescents to feel self-conscious and unsure of their abilities during this period of rapid growth. They need lots of opportunities to demonstrate to themselves and to others that they can do things well.

Sample Activities

* Clubs that help children learn and demonstrate new skills such as photography, gymnastics, Karate, magic, cooking, sewing, carpentry, etc.
* Tutoring/study time to complete homework.
* Learning CPR & First Aid.
* Leading activities for younger children (e.g. teaching skills and rules used in various sports and games, teaching music or arts and crafts skills).

Management Tips

* Assess readiness for all activities, recognizing children's varying skill and ability levels.
* Be sure to teach skills required for all activities.
* Recognize achievements, informally and formally if appropriate.
* Offer support, understanding, and encouragement when children fail.

3. The Need for Self-Definition. Rapidly growing children need lots of opportunities to explore who and what they are becoming and how they relate to the world around them.

Sample Activities

* Cultural awareness activities such as ethnic history projects, cultural celebrations, local area or community history, traditions, geography.
* Career related projects--special visitors from different fields (doctors, scientists, nature specialists, artists, newspaper reporters, radio "D. J.s", sports figures, etc.), career related field trips and clubs.

* Informal and formal drama activities that encourage children to explore a variety of new and different roles in a positive, non-threatening atmosphere.

Management Tips

* Encourage children to contribute diverse interests, skills, tastes, etc. as they work and play together.
* Provide opportunities for individualized activities.
* Be a positive role model who notices and appreciates that individual and cultural differences enrich life.

4. The Need for Creative Expression. As children's bodies and minds rapidly grow and change, they need lots of opportunities to develop an understanding and acceptance of themselves through creative expression of feelings, interests, thoughts, and abilities.

Sample Activities

* Painting, drawing, sculpting.
* Weaving, macrame, potting.
* Singing, acting, dancing, playing musical instruments.
* Writing poetry and plays.
* Gardening.
* Producing video and audio tapes.

Management Tips

* Provide opportunities for informal improvisation as well as formal presentations in the performing arts.
* Recognize sports as a means of creative expression and help children find ways to be creative in other areas such as science and math that are often not seen as creative or artistic endeavors.
* Provide resources for creative expression that relate to children's current interests and concerns.

5. The Need for Positive Social Interaction. Though the family remains of primary importance to older children, they need increasing opportunities to experience positive social relationships that allow them to explore emerging ideas, views, values, and feelings with peers and adult friends.

Sample Activities

* Informal small group discussion periods designed to stimulate discussion of ideas, concerns, problems, and feelings--"rap sessions".
* Club activities that provide opportunities for children to develop friendships and relationships through learning a new skill, exploring a new interest, etc. (E.g. Quilting Club, Joke Club, Clowning Club, Sports Clinics, Sign Language Club, Cheerleading Club, Babysitting Club, etc.).

Management Tips

* Plan activities that encourage and require collaboration.
* Help children develop communication techniques for handling social conflicts and problems. (Excellent resource--Creative Conflict Resolution by William J. Kriedler, available through NAEYC and School-Age NOTES Resource Catalog. Contains many ideas for facilitating positive group interaction and solving problems and conflicts through small group discussion, role playing, and games.)

6. The Need for Structure and Clear Limits. As older children grow in their need for independence and freedom, they also need the security of structure and clear limits to help them cope with increased responsibilities and new areas of exploration.

Sample Activities

* Group discussions, role plays, etc. that focus on developing positive group interaction and social relationships and the need for reasonable rules and limits. (Resource: W.J. Kriedler's Creative Conflict Resolution)

* Clubs that develop awareness of the need for structure and clear limits (e.g. Red Cross First Aid Club, Consumer Awareness Club, Bike and/or Water Safety Club, Survival Skills Club, etc.)
* Cooperative Games

Management Tips

* Be sure children understand the purpose of all activities.
* Always identify the specific tasks to be accomplished.
* Introduce more complicated activities and game rules and directions in small segments.
* Set time limits on activities in advance.
* Set clear space boundaries for activities.
* Involve children in the discussion of acceptable behavior and get their input in setting rules and limits and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Then develop a short list of important rules and limits and post them in a visible spot. Review rules periodically to be sure they are still needed.

7. The Need for Meaningful Participation. The Center for Early Adolescence stresses that older children "need to participate in the activities that shape their lives." That is, they need opportunities to develop and use new talents, skills, and interests in the context of the real world.

Sample Activities

* Projects that benefit the community such as:
  - clean up/recycling campaigns
  - planting flowers, grass, bushes
  - creating murals or sculptures in school or other community buildings
  - creating centerpieces for school cafeteria tables or senior citizen dining halls
  - performing for nursing homes, hospitals, day care centers, etc.
  - collecting food or clothing for needy families or disaster victims
* Fundraising activities such as a car wash, bake sale or "mini craft mall" (sale of crafts made by the children). Proceeds can be used for field trips, special visitors, or additional games and equipment chosen by the children.

* Clubs that can help individual children learn skills that will make it possible to earn their own money (e.g. Babysitting Club, Craft Clubs like Tie Dye, Batik, Lawn Care and Gardening Club, etc.)
* Participation in national or regional contests such as writing contests, slogan and poster contests, etc. Excellent resource: All the Best Contests for Kids (See Resource List).
* Clubs that help children connect with others such as Pen Pal Clubs, Ecology Clubs, Travel Clubs, Community Awareness Clubs, Fan Clubs)

Management Tips

* Be sure to give children opportunities to participate in activity planning sessions. Avoid the pitfall of planning for older children instead of with them.
* Monitor older children's increased capacities for participating in long term projects and activities and plan accordingly.

THE LAST WORD: Even though one of the seven developmental needs may be the primary focus of any given activity, the most successful activities for older children are those which address most or all of the seven developmental needs at some level. With this in mind as you do your planning, ask yourself how each activity can be used to address as many of these needs as possible.

Activity Planning Sheet

Name of Activity/Club_____

Developmental Need	How the Activity Can Be Used to Meet the Need
1. Physical Activity	
2. Competence/Achievement	
3. Self-Definition	
4. Creative Expression	
5. Positive Social Interaction	
6. Structure and Clear Limits	
7. Meaningful Participation	

OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN TEMPERAMENT AND ATTENTION[3]

In addition to knowing about general age group characteristics, it's important to know something about individual differences in people. Individuals of all ages have unique, in-born characteristics that influence how they experience and respond to what's happening in their lives. Problems often occur when caregivers overlook inborn traits related to a person's temperament and attention. These characteristics powerfully influence the way people behave and should always be taken into account when planning programs and working with individuals.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: The amount of time the person usually spends in periods of activity compared to inactivity. Examples of Extremes:

* Highly active people find it hard to sit still or "stay put" for quiet activities.
* Less active people find it harder to "get going" and may prefer quiet activities.

REGULARITY OF BODY RHYTHMS: The regularity of the person's bodily functions and habits--eating, going to the bathroom, sleeping, waking, etc. Examples of Extremes:

* Highly regular people may find it hard to cope when routines don't fit their "internal clock".
* Unpredictable people may not have regular routines and schedules for eating, sleeping, etc. They may need reminders about when it's time to eat, rest, go to the bathroom, etc.

APPROACH OR WITHDRAWAL: The initial response of the person to new people, objects, and situations. Examples of Extremes:

* Approach people go toward new people and situations without hesitation.
* Withdrawal people hold back from newness.

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[3]Adapted from C.B. Liden, M.D. and J.R. Zalenski. Temperament and Attention: Neurobehavioral Contributors to Individual Differences in Development, Behavior, and Health. Pittsburgh, Pa.: TRANSACT Health Systems, Inc.; 1992.

ADAPTABILITY: The ease with which the person adapts to changes. Examples of Extremes:

* **Easily adapting** people can "go with the flow" and are more independent.
* **Slowly Adapting** people have trouble adjusting to new routines and expectations.

PERSISTENCE: The amount of time a person gives to an activity. Examples of Extremes

* **Long Persistence** people stick with things for long periods of time, even when there are difficulties.
* **Short persistence** people tend to give up easily.

INTENSITY: The energy a person uses in making a response. Examples of Extremes:

* **High Intensity** people have extreme emotions which can make it hard for them to learn, communicate, or finish a task.
* **Low Intensity** people tend to be "low-keyed"; their emotions don't get in their way.

SENSITIVITY TO STIMULI: The intensity of stimulation it takes to get a response from the person. Examples of Extremes:

* **Highly Sensitive** people are easily affected by things in the environment--light, heat, sound, etc., and often become easily frustrated, excited, angered, etc.
* **Less Sensitive** people aren't as affected by stimuli in the around them and are less emotional about things.

MOOD: The amount of friendly, pleasant, joyful behavior as opposed to unpleasant, unfriendly behavior during a day. Examples of Extremes:

* **Positive** people often attract others and have good social, communication, and independent learning skills.
* **Negative** people are often less independent with poor social skills which can lead to isolation.

THINKING TEMPO: This relates to whether a person is more impulsive or reflective in doing things. Examples of Extremes:

* **Impulsive** people tend to act first and think later.
* **Reflective** people spend lots of time "thinking things over" before doing things.

DISTRACTIBILITY: The extent to which a person can focus on a task when faced with stimuli unrelated to the task. Examples of Extremes:

* **Highly Distractible** people find it hard to focus in and stay with what they're doing.
* **Less Distractible** people tend to focus in, use time well.

WORKSHEET--LOOKING AT SPECIAL NEEDS IN SACC

Nine Dimensions of Temperament and Other Factors That Interact to Affect Behavioral Style

Dimension of Temperament	Sample Program Areas to Consider	* Other Related Factors to Consider	Program Adjustments
1. Activity Level Range: High - Low	- Group Time - Transitions - Nap Time - Room Arrangement - Activity Offerings - Free Play Time		
2. Regularity (Predictability of patterns of sleep, appetite, etc.) Range: Regular: Irregular	- Arrival and Release Time - Center Schedule - Center Routines (Snack, Nap, etc.) - Schedule - Schedule Changes		
3. Approach/Withdrawal (Initial Response to Newness) Range: Approach - Withdrawal	- Group Activities - Special Visitors and - Free Play - Special Groupings (Clubs, Skill Groups Mixed Age Groups) - Performance Activities - Change in Pick-Up Person		
4. Adaptability (Accommodate Change) Range: Fast - Slow	- New Teacher - New Room Arrangement - New Groupings(s) - New Schedule, Procedures - Transitions, Routines		

* Examples: Readiness, Attention, Stresses, Physical Constitution & Health, Attitudes, Expectations of Self and Others, Temperaments of Others

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Dimension of Temperament	Sample Program Areas to Consider	Other Related Factors to Consider	Program Adjustments
5. Level of Sensory Threshold (What It Takes to Get a Response-- Sensitivity to Light, Sound, etc.) Range: High - Low	- Activity Offerings - Groupings - Room Arrangement & Design - Level of Stimulation - Type of Sports & Games - Temperature - Groupings		
6. Intensity of Response (Energy of Response, Loudness, Movement) Range: High - Low	- Teacher Role & Style - Center Rules & Limits - Groupings - Level of Stimulation - Procedures for Playing Games, Transitions		
7. Quality of Mood Range: Positive - Negative	- Activity Offerings - Room Arrangement & Design - Quality of Relationships * Child/Teacher * Child/Child		
8. Distractibility Range: High - Low	- Free Play/Free Choice - Room Location, Arrangement/Design - Activity Offerings - Environment for Presentations/ Announcements/Performers - Groupings/Relationships		
9. Persistence Range: Long - Short	- Schedule of Activities - Diversity & Complexity of Activities - Groupings - Teacher Role		

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PROBLEM SOLVING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN SCHOOL-AGE CENTERS

Tommy

Tommy is a 6 year old boy who is very active. He can't sit still during group time announcements and has difficulty staying with quiet activities for any length of time. He frequently "clowns around" and acts out while the teacher is talking, making the other kids laugh and join in with his antics. Tommy rarely listens when the teacher gives directions or reviews safety rules. When he plays, he plays with intensity, often impulsively breaking toys, ruining supplies, etc. He has a difficult time working or playing on his own, so he spends his free time bothering other kids who are productively involved in their own activities.

Notes:

Cindy

Cindy is a rather shy 10 year old girl who seems to be at loose ends at the school-age center. She is much taller and more mature than the other children and seems very concerned about her appearance and grooming. Cindy never seems to want to do any of the planned activities and stubbornly resists participating. While other children play group games outside, she turns cartwheels nearby or sits under a tree, digging aimlessly in the dirt. While others are engaged in free choice activities, she wanders around the room and says she isn't interested in the choices available or in the other kids--she's more interested in talking to the teachers.

Notes:

Jason

Jason is an 11 year old boy. He's very athletic and skilled at playing many sports. Both mom and dad are real proud of him and have encouraged his participation in many competitive activities. He's popular with other boys because of his athletic ability. They see him as a leader and role model. In response to these boys, the center offers a lot of competitive sports and games. To encourage team spirit, in fact, the teacher usually rewards the winning team by letting them choose the snack menu for the next day or select the next set of center activities. However, trouble often breaks out during competitive games--and Jason (also known as "Mr. Hot Head") is often the instigator. During baseball games, for example, he gets very angry when he strikes out or when he's called out running around the bases. He almost always argues and throws a temper tantrum when things don't go his way. He screams, swears, calls people names, sometimes throws a bat or ball at the teacher or other kids who are acting as "umpires." He is very resistant when the whistle blows and it's time to leave the playground--sports are "his thing" and he doesn't want to change to doing something else. Even though Jason excels at sports, it seems impossible to have a smooth day on the playground or in the gym when he's around.

Notes:

The Older Group

A school-age center serving 60 children divided children into three age groupings for after school activities. Twelve 5th and 6th graders were assigned to Ms. Baker who was responsible for programming for older children. Ms. Baker had been a classroom teacher the year before and felt confident she knew what older elementary kids liked. She spent many extra hours of preparation before the school year began--decorating and setting up the room and designing a month's worth of daily activities. Many of the activities were art projects which could be done in a half an hour of time. She devised a schedule that began each day with a group time where she could make general announcements about activities to be offered for the day--two choices were always available. After activity choice time, Ms. Baker planned for her group to join the younger children for sports and games in the school gym or outside. Following sports and games, her group would return to their room for free time or homework for about 1/2 hour before parents would arrive.

After the program was in session for one week, Ms. Baker was shocked to find that the 6th graders were not at all interested in what she had planned for them. They resisted choosing either arts and crafts alternatives and wanted to spend their time gossiping and joking with each other. Some just wanted to do homework--because that's what their parents expected. They were also angry about having to join the younger children for sports and games. Most of the children in Ms. Baker's group were girls and somehow she had always thought of older girls as being polite and friendly--but the opposite was true. They barely said "Hello" when they entered the center room and during group announcement time, they either ignored her entirely or were constantly interrupting her--with rude comments, giggles, or playing with some object they had brought from home. Sometimes they intentionally ruined posters and displays she had put up around the room. In short, all of the plans Ms. Baker had made for her group didn't seem to be working.

Notes:

The Little Rascals

Three 3rd grade boys have turned the child care center upside down. During group time, they wrestle with each other and often pick fights with other children. Often they mimic the teachers and this gets lots of laughs. During free play time, they are a disastrous team. They briefly try activities, but then give up and roam around disrupting groups of children-- destroying projects, starting fights, and doing everything they can think of to call attention to themselves--one day the teachers found them trying to "escape" by crawling out the window! They are completely out of control.

Notes:

Julie

Julie is a shy 5 year old who has never been to child care before. Until now, she has always been at home with her mom--but this year several new things have happened to Julie. She started kindergarten, mom and dad have gotten a divorce, and mom also has gone to work. When she comes to child care, all she does is talk about going home. She is very anxious about whether her mom will pick her up on time and often sits by herself crying. When the teacher tries to bring her in to group activities, she cries even more--sometimes so loudly that it's both distracting and upsetting to the other kids.

Notes:

Bobby

Bobby is a 7 year old who made it clear the first day at child care that he didn't want to be there. He told the teacher and the other kids that he wants to be left alone and that he doesn't want anybody to touch his things or play with him. Bobby is big for his age--he takes after dad who is very athletic looking and about 6'6" tall. Bobby really identifies with his dad who travels a lot. The teachers notice that Bobby's worst days are those when dad is out of town and mom is the one who brings Bobby to SACC and picks him up. While Bobby and dad are very close; mom and Bobby seem distant with each other. Bobby is very cool to mom and also resists any friendly gestures from the teachers and the other kids. When the kids try to play with Bobby or move through "his space", he becomes angry very quickly--often slugging people or throwing blocks or other toys at them. When the teachers talk with him about his behavior, he cries and says he is sorry. He just doesn't seem to be able to think before he acts. The teachers are really afraid that unless Bobby gets control of himself, somebody is going to be seriously hurt.

Notes:

Questions to Help Caregivers Respond to Individual Differences:

Conflicts are often a result of a mismatch between the child's unique characteristics and behavioral style and the expectations of the environment. Here are some key questions that will help you understand more about the unique temperamental characteristics of a child in your care. When you are more aware of these characteristics, you can be a more effective caregiver.

* How active is this child? What's the best way to respond to his/her activity level?

* How regular are this child's bodily habits most of the time? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her eating, bathroom and other habits?

* What is the child's first reaction to new people and situations? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her tendency?

* How adaptable is this child? What's the best way for me to help him/her get used to things?

* How persistent is this child? Are there special things I can do to help the child keep on trying if persistence is a problem? Does the child have trouble focusing attention on what's going on? If yes, what can I do to make it easier?

* Is the child especially sensitive to light, heat, noise, pain, touch, etc.? Is he/she easily overstimulated? If yes, are there program adjustments that should be made to accommodate this sensitivity?

* Is the child intense in responding to people and things that happen--easily upset or excitable? If yes, how can I anticipate potential problems? What helps him/her calm down when he/she becomes upset, fearful, very angry, etc.?

* What is the child's general mood? What's the best way for me to respond to any extremes in his/her mood?

* Does the child tend to be impulsive--does he/she act before thinking? Or does he/she tend to over-think things? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her tendency?

ANTICIPATING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS RELATED TO TEMPERAMENT IN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

To help you anticipate how an individual child you are concerned about in your program might react in different situations, ask yourself the following questions. Place a (*) by any that would concern you and talk with colleagues about how you could be of help to the child.

a. Your child's parents have not arrived by 6:00 P.M., although they usually come by 5:15 P.M. Your child will:

b. You announce free play is over and your child is in the middle of his/her favorite game. Your child will:

c. The group has finished playing an exciting kickball game on a hot day and you want everyone to come inside and calm down. Your child will:

d. You are showing children how to play a new game and your child can't seem to get the hang of it. Your child will:

e. You call a group meeting to talk about safety rules before going on a field trip. Your child will:

f. You ask a small group of children to wait around a table while you get out the art materials for a project you are responsible for leading. Your child will:

g. You have gone on a hiking field trip. Your child is wearing new shoes that aren't broken in yet. Your child will:

h. A substitute teacher has come to take over your group for the day. Your child will:

i. You have been planning all week to go on a field trip to the zoo, but it's raining, so you're going bowling instead. Your child will:

j. The group has been told that no one can have snack until everyone is sitting quietly. Your child will:

k. The bus has stalled on the way to the swimming pool and no one knows when a replacement bus will arrive. Your child will:

l. You have gathered the group for a magic show by a special visitor. The visitor is late. Your child will:

m. You call your group in from the playground to have snack earlier than usual. Your child will:

n. Your child joins the program several days after everyone else has been coming. Your child will:

o. No one is available to greet your child at the beginning of the day. Your child will:

p. Two 4th grade boys have started a wrestling match in the hallway while you have gone to get the soccer ball and other equipment to use outside. Your child will:

SACC CENTER INTEREST SURVEY

We want to know more about you so that we can be sure to plan center activities that are fun and interesting to you. Please fill out this survey to help us make our SACC center a great place to be! Thanks!

MULTI MEDIA

Movies

What are your favorite kind of movies? Adventure? Science Fiction? Drama? Comedy? Horror?

Who are your favorite movie stars?

If you could choose to be one movie star for a day, who would you be?

Which do you like best? Short films or cartoons?

What G or PG rated movies would you like to see in SACC?

Music

What radio station(s) do you listen to?

Who are your favorite musicians or bands?

Do you like to dance to music?

Are there any records or tapes you would like SACC to buy for the center?

Do you sing or play a musical instrument? If yes, would you like to perform for the SACC kids? For the parents?

Is there a musical instrument you would like to learn to play?

Books/Magazines

What kinds of books do you like to read? Non-Fiction? Adventure? Comedy? Science Fiction? Other?

Are there books you would like us to check out for you from the library? If yes, which ones?

Do you read comics? If yes, which ones? Do you have a favorite comic strip?

What magazines do you like to read? Are there any magazines you would like SACC to subscribe to?

Television

What is your favorite T. V. program?

Do you have a favorite T. V. game show that you would like to play in SACC? If yes, what is it?

CLUBS/ONGOING PROJECTS

Projects

Do you prefer doing activities that are short (30 minutes to an hour) or would you like to be involved in more activities that last longer (activities that can be continued the next day)?

Do you like to work on projects you can complete and take home the same day or do you like to work on projects for several days?

Do you prefer doing projects by yourself? With one or two friends? Or in a group of five or more?

Clubs

Check any of the following clubs you like to be in at SACC:

_____ DRAMA (prop making, set designing, acting, creating costumes, producing a play)

_____ PHOTOGRAPHY (experimenting with different kinds of cameras made in the club, learning techniques of better picture-taking)

_____ SEWING CLUB (learning to embroider, cross-stitch, needlepoint, making a finished product to take home)

_____ MACRAME CLUB (learning different techniques of knot making, making a wall hanging, plant holder, or piece of jewelry)

_____ WEAVING CLUB (making different kinds of looms, completing small projects and a large woven masterpiece!)

_____ NUTRITION CLUB (learning healthy ways to eat and stay fit: aerobics, preparation of tasty and healthy foods, dental hygiene, etc.)

_____ AEROBICS (Floor and movement exercises, making up routines)

_____ CAMPING CLUB (learning about wilderness survival skills, learning how to tie different kinds of knots, going on nature hikes, possibly going on an overnight camping trip)

_____ OTHER IDEAS? _____

Drama

Would you like to perform a play or a skit for the younger children? For the parents?

Are you interested in puppets? If you are, would you like to make different kinds of puppets?

Would you be interested in performing a puppet show?

Art

Place a check by any of the art activities below that interest you or that you would like to learn to do:

_____ Tie-dying	_____ Macrame	_____ Others (Please list)
_____ Papier-Mache	_____ Sculpture	_____
_____ Decoupage	_____ Sewing	_____
_____ Coiling, Basketry	_____ Weaving	

What is your most favorite art project?

Games/Puzzles

What is your favorite board game?

What board game would you like SACC to have that we don't have?

Do we have a board game in SACC you don't know how to play? If yes, what is it?

Are you interested in doing an ongoing jigsaw puzzle of 500-1000 pieces?

What is your favorite <u>active</u> game to play?

Would you like to learn new gym games with more complicated rules?

Do you enjoy tournaments?

Do you enjoy games where everybody wins?

<u>Cooking/Food</u>

Do you like to cook?

If you could cook anything for snack, what would it be?

<u>Building</u>

Do you like to work with wood, a hammer, nails, etc.?

Would you like to build a group project like a fort or a robot?

Are you interested in building models?

Do you like to carve or whittle?

What other kinds of things would you like to build?

<u>Science/Nature</u>

What is your favorite nature project?

What is your least favorite nature project?

Do you like to grow plants?

Do you like to take nature hikes?

Do you like to use the microscope?

Check any of the following you would like to learn more about:

_____ Weather (weather patterns, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.)
_____ Astronomy (study of the stars)
_____ Geology (study of rocks and gems)
_____ Solar System (study of planets and the galaxy)

MISCELLANEOUS

SACC Changes

If you could be a SACC teacher for a day, what art or game activities would you do?

What is one thing we have not done in SACC that you would like to do?

Which of the following things is your favorite activity in SACC? (Circle it)

Listening to music Free Choice Outside Active Games

Free choice play inside Playing in Housekeeping

Art activities Science Activities Other:_____

If you could change something in SACC, what would it be?

Weekend Outings

What do you do on Saturday and Sunday?

What is the most favorite local place you have gone with your mom or dad?

Would you be interested in taking a couple of weekend days to go to a museum or park in the area with older SACC kids?

School Subjects

What are your most favorite and least favorite school subjects?

What do you like to do most in school?

Special Visitors

Do you like it when we have special visitors in SACC?

Who would you like to come visit SACC as a special visitor?

Tell Us More. . . . . .Are there other ideas you have to make SACC more fun that we haven't asked about?

(Prepared by teachers in the Fairfax County Office for Children's School-Age Child Care Program, Fairfax, Virginia. Ed. by American Child Care Foundation, Inc., Cape Charles, Virginia.

ONGOING CLUBS AND PROJECTS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Gourmet Cooking	A different food is prepared at each session, including Chinese/Quick Wok, Pizza, Hors d'oeuvres, etc. The kids learn to set an appropriate table and eat the prepared foods.
Color My Image	Hair, skin, nail care, and application of make-up is presented. Fashion, poise, and proper etiquette can also be included. The club ends with a fashion show and demonstrations presented by the kids.
Clowning	Kids learn about the personalities, wardrobe, and make-up of different types of clowns. They learn and practice juggling, magic tricks, and improvisational skits. (These skills can be used by the kids to earn money by performing at birthday parties, etc.)
Volley Ball Clinic	The club presents techniques and skills of volley ball. Sessions focus on skill building activities as well as team games.
Cheerleading	Movement, dance, gymnastics, and tumbling skills are presented. Participants practice these skills and use them to create, perfect, and perform several routines.
Pottery	Various methods of handbuilding with clay are demonstrated. Each participant designs and completes a pot or sculpture using the coil, slab, or pinch methods.
Babysitting/Child Care	The Red Cross offers a mini course about babysitting, including important points to remember, safety guidelines, etc. The kids receive a certificate and prepared written material to keep upon completion of the course.

(Clubs/Projects for Older Children, continued)

ADDITIONAL CLUB/PROJECT IDEAS

Cooking

No Bake Foods
Bread Baking
Cake Decorating
Canning and Preserving Fruit/
Making Preserves

Sports

Badminton
Martial Arts, Karate
Jump Roping/Double Dutch
Table Tennis
Skate Boarding
Gymnastics and Stunts
Tumbling
Sports Clinics
- basketball
- soccer
- field hockey
- baseball

Fitness and Aerobics
Dancercize

The Performing Arts

Acting/Theatre
Puppetry
Dance (pop/current styles)
Sing-A-Long/Lipsynching

Miscellaneous

Consumer Awareness
Community Involvement Projects
Lawn Maintenance
Newspaper
Card Players
Chess
National Geographic/Travel
Camping/Survival Skills/Orienteering
Pet Care
Project Wild (Nature Games & Exercises)

Crafts

Drying and Preserving Flowers
Paper Mache Projects
Print Making
- linoleum block
- woodcut
- silk screen
- found objects & scrap materials

Mask Making
Stenciling
Tissue Paper Projects
Candle Making
Batik and Tye-dying
Woodburning
Leatherwork
String Art
Holiday Crafts

Stitchery

Quilt Making
Weaving
- card
- loom

Embroidery
Needlepoint
Knitting
Crochet
Rug Making
- latch hook
- punch hook

Model Building
First Aid
Sign Language
Computer
Paper Airplane

PRESTO ENVIRONMENTS IN SHARED SPACE:

HOW TO MAKE THEM WORK FOR SACC

by Roberta L. Newman

Many school age child care programs are housed in shared space in preschools, churches, YMCA's/YWCA's, community buildings, and public schools. The type of space used may be a classroom, multi-purpose room, gymnasium, or a cafeteria. Even though shared space is used, children attending after school programs need a home base area which is relaxed, homey, inviting, attractive, interesting, and functional. Above all, an after school program environment should make children feel as if it's designed for them while they're using it--even if the space is used for other purposes before and after program hours.

Where to Begin Your Planning

Sharing space will have an impact on several program areas: activities, equipment, and room arrangement. Before you move in and set up (or before you give up on the possibility of creating some "atmosphere" in shared space!), take time to gather information about your primary shared space area as well as other building facilities that may be available. Putting together answers to the following questions should help you as you begin planning how to use shared space as effectively as possible:

* How many children will the program serve?

* What type of space be shared?

* What other groups will be using the space? When?

* What arrangements can be made for regular and direct communication between the different groups using the space?

* Will some program equipment be permanently set up or must everything be stored away on a daily basis?

* Will there be access to a storage area? If so, how large is it? How close is it to the primary space to be used for the program? Can it be locked?

* What kind of furniture, equipment, and supplies will already be set up in the space, if any?

* What is the size and shape of the space? Where is it located in the building? (Prepare a floor plan to use as you think through how to use the space.)

* What types of activities will your group do in the shared space?

* Will the program have use of other areas of the building? If yes, what activities can take place in these areas? What kind of storage is available in these areas, if any?

Once you have the answers to these questions, you are ready to consider some of the equipment options that can help you use your space effectively.

How to Identify the Best Furniture, Equipment, and Supplies for Use in Shared Space

More than likely, programs that operate in shared space will need to create, set up, and take down environments on a daily basis. Certain types of furniture and equipment lend themselves to being set up, taken down, moved around, and stored away with relative ease in a short amount of time. It's important, then, to carefully identify and select items that lend themselves to use in shared space.

The following list of suggested furniture, equipment, and supplies will help you plan a "presto" environment that is functional, attractive, comfortable, and stimulating. For each item listed, you will find a description of the characteristics that makes it suitable for use in shared space. You will also find a list of possible uses for each item. Some of the items listed are more portable than others. Use the answers to the questions listed earlier to help you decide which items would work best in your space. All of the items listed can be purchased commercially. However, low cost "home-made" versions of some of the items could be made by a volunteer with basic carpentry skills.

FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES FOR USE IN SACC PROGRAMS THAT SHARE SPACE

Item	Description	Uses
BASIC FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT:		
Tables	* rectangle (3'x 6' or 3' x 8') * round * fold out type * wooden with wheels (select only those that are both sturdy and light weight)	* work area for projects and activities * space for playing board and other games * place to display projects * administrative area for staff * counter top type space for audio visual and other equipment * storage area under table (when table can be covered to camouflage items being stored)
Chairs	* stacking on base with wheels * folding	* definition of areas for relaxation and work * area for coats, books, and personal belongings
Shelves	* wooden with pegboard on wheels * open-up cabinet type (select those with 2, 3, 4, shelves, avoiding higher units)	* borders to define and contain related supplies for interest areas * room dividers (with backs covered attractively with sturdy material that does not tear easily when moved) * storage area for teacher supplies, facing open shelves to wall or covering them with a curtain

Cabinets	* wooden on wheels * metal on rolling base (select those with built-in or attached lock)	* storage space for supplies * room divider * display board (front or back)
Cubbies	* wooden units on wheels with sections that are large enough for coats and books (most have 10 to 30 box-like sections)	* screens for hiding and protecting storage areas * bulletin board/display area (backs of units)
Roll Carts	* metal with 2 - 3 shelves on wheels	* transport of equipment and supplies from storage to program space * moveable interest areas * areas for storage of heavy equipment (T.V., stereo, etc.)
Storage Bins	* cardboard, plastic, wooden boxes or crates with these characteristics: - like-size with tops for easy storage/stacking - covered attractively for use in the program's environment - easy to label in order to store related items together	* containers for "presto" environments/interest areas * supply storage * transport of supplies

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES TO MAKE THE SPACE ATTRACTIVE AND COMFORTABLE:

Bean Bag Chairs	* Light weight versions that are: - large enough for 1 or 2 children - sturdy and comfortable - durable and washable	* creates a homey, comfortable environment * adds softness to the room * encourages kids to gather for socializing, listening to music, playing quiet games, etc.
Mattress	* single size with attractive, clean, sturdy covering	* same as bean bag chairs
Rugs	* low pile area rugs (with under pads) large enough for a few children to gather on, but small enough to carry to and from storage areas if room must be set up daily	* creates softness and warmth * encourages children to use the floor space * creates an area for relaxing * cuts down on noise levels in room
Curtains	* shower curtains or or fabric that can hang from a dowel rod attached to the ceiling, window, or hung between large furniture pieces	* attractive covering that gives space a soft feeling * helps to create boundaries in the room
Styrofoam Sheets	* insulation sheeting purchased at hardware stores: - sizes available: 2'x 3', 3'x 5', 4' x 6' - lightweight for easy hanging over shelf units, etc.	* bulletin boards (items can be posted using push pins) * screening of storage areas * creates more private areas in the room

Tri-Wall Cardboard	* cardboard that is thick and very sturdy, suitable for a variety of decorative uses and construction projects	* room dividers (can be designed, built, and decorated by the children) * clubhouses or private nooks (again, can be created by children)
Blocks	* large hollow building blocks	* can be used daily by children to create private areas

How to Put It All Together

Before you make final decisions about what furniture and equipment will best suit your program needs, take time to review your answers to the planning questions listed earlier. Always keep in mind that your goal is to select furniture, equipment, and supplies that will help you create a rich and varied program for the children even though part or all of the environment may need to be set up and taken down daily. Even in shared space, several separate interest areas should be set up daily so that children can work on a variety of tasks, gain skills, build self confidence, and socialize with friends in a relaxed atmosphere. In shared space settings, interest areas should be viewed as well organized, portable modules or kits that can be set up and stored away as easily as possible. While it will probably not be feasible to set up every interest area every day, programs should develop a number of modules or kits to combine in different ways to keep the program varied and stimulating. However, areas that help give the program a soft, homelike, relaxed feeling should be put in place daily (eg. areas with bean bag chairs, rugs, etc.)

Quality school-age child care programs usually include a number of the interest areas and functional areas listed below. After choosing the areas you want to include in your program, take the time to list both the activities that will take place in each area and the supplies you will need on hand to accomplish these activities. (See the following examples for Reading and Games Areas.) Then, match each area with the furniture, equipment, and decorative supplies that will help make the planned activities work smoothly.

Options for SACC Interest Areas and Functional Areas

Reading

Activities. reading, browsing, relaxing, pencil and paper games, storytelling, looking at displays, creative writing, doing homework, or just being alone to think.

Supplies. books (mystery, sports, animal, cooking, story, dictionary, book of world records, etc.), comic books, magazines (sports, fashion, wildlife, cars, etc.), local newspapers, current events board (sports events, TV and radio schedules, community events), feltboard and felt shapes for stories, globe.

Games

Activities. small group and individual games, developing manipulative skills, thinking, socializing, competing, cooperating.

Supplies. variety of store bought, catalog, board games, computer games, playing cards, puzzles, home-made games

Additional Interest and Functional Areas (Develop lists of Activities and Supplies for each):

Art and Crafts
Listening/Music/Visual Aids
Dramatic Play/Housekeeping
Science/Nature
Active Games
Clubhouse
Snack Preparation/Cooking
Parent Bulletin Boards
Cubby and Locker Area
Teacher/Administrative Area

The Last Word: Careful Planning and Advance Preparation Are the Keys to Creating Successful "Presto" Environments for SACC.

Here is a review of the steps to take in planning programs that will use shared space:

1. Gather information and analyze your space, your program goals, and your program resources.

2. Research furniture, equipment, and decorative materials and supplies that are suitable for your space and program goals.
3. Develop lists of the interest and functional areas you want your program to include, complete with a list of the activities and supplies associated with each area.
4. Match each program area with furniture, equipment, and supplies that will make the area work best. Secure the resources you need and develop each area as a portable module or kit.
5. Arrange the space in a way that will allow children to choose from a variety of exciting activity choices, to select their own materials, and most of all, to feel comfortable and have a good time with you and their friends at SACC!

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KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED

by Roberta L. Newman

Several years ago I noticed a sign in a poster shop: "To Know nothing is to imagine everything." It struck me at the time that we in child care often put parents in that kind of position. On the one hand, we assume that they are aware of what our programs are like and how their children are doing. Yet, unless we make a conscious effort to let them know what's going on, parents must depend on their children for information and use their imaginations to fill in the blanks themselves. Some parents imagine everything is wonderful when it really isn't. Other parents are nervous about what they don't know. Based on very little information, they may develop a negative impression about the quality of care their child is receiving.

When children are not with them, parents want to know what and how they're doing. Parents like to hear about the little things their children say and do--anecdotes about daily happenings that give them insights about how children see the world. They also want to know when children are having problems. It's up to us as responsible child care professionals to keep them informed.

If we agree that good parent/caregiver communication is essential, what can we do to make sure it happens? I have found it helpful to think in terms of three basic steps:

1. Share Information

   Set up formal ways for parents to learn about daily and weekly happenings in your program. Start out right. Think through what kinds of orientation materials parents need to have: policy and procedural statements, health and safety guidelines, program philosophy and standards, descriptions of the daily program structure, etc. Once children are attending your program, keep the information coming. Use parent bulletin boards, calendars of events and regular newsletters.

   Remember that sharing information implies a two-way exchange of information. Find out about children's needs and interests and parent expectations through intake conferences or interest survey forms. Offer discussion groups in which parents can clarify their understanding of the program and explore ways the program can better meet the needs of parents and children.

Communicate regularly about each child's experience in the program. Take time to send home "good news" notes or make a short phone call when a child learns a new skill, solves a hard problem, makes something beautiful, says something funny, or has an especially happy day.

2. Build Relationships

Communication experts tell us that the more we talk to one another, the more positive our attitude toward communicating becomes. Brief exchanges between child care professionals and parents at drop off and pick up times help build friendly, open relationships. Daily warm greetings and goodbyes help children and parents feel comfortable and important.

In addition to informal daily chats, plan opportunities for parents to be involved in your program so you can get to know each other. Invite parent participation in family picnics, potlucks, or other social events. Include parents in special program activities like songfests, visiting performers, or field trips. If you have a large program, don't forget to invite parents to help with special projects like building a playground or repairing program equipment.

3. Share Problems

Even if child care providers take the time to build relationships and share information with parents, **sharing problems is never easy.** Yet, it is one of the most important things caregivers must do. It's also something providers must expect to do rather frequently. While parents are often understandably apprehensive about discussing problems, they don't want to be kept in the dark. They want to know. How can child care professionals meet the challenge of sharing problems or concerns with parents in the most effective way? Here are a few suggestions:

* **Share problems at the right time and in the right place.** When you have real concerns, never share them casually or in front of other people. Plan thoughtfully and set up a private meeting (or a private phone call if a meeting is impossible). Keep in mind that it's often difficult for parents and caregivers to focus productively on problem sharing and problem solving at the end of a long work day when they may feel emotionally, mentally, and physically drained.

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* **Start a problem sharing conversation by offering some positive comments first.** Remember what Haim Ginott said in his book Teacher and Child, "When a teacher talks to parents about their children, he inevitably intrudes on family dreams." End your meeting with positive comments, too, if at all possible.

* **When describing the problem, be factual and objective.** Avoid preaching, blaming, criticizing, or judging.

* **Monitor the reactions of parents.** As you talk with parents about problems, maintain eye contact and be aware of body language or words that indicate the parent may be feeling tense, hurt, disappointed, or angry.

* **As questions, get advice, and invite parents to work with you.** Remember that parents know their children better than anyone else. Find out if they have the same perspective and expectations of their children as you do. Work towards agreeing on strategies and solutions to solve the problem. Stress consistency between home and provider.

* **Listen.** When you solicit comments and suggestions from parents, be sure you really listen to what they have to say. Keep these **active listening** criteria in mind:

  - Be genuinely open to hearing ideas and opinions. Take time to hear parents out. Don't interrupt. Don't rush.

  - Acknowledge and reflect parent's feelings. Be willing to accept feelings even if they're different from your. Check your perceptions of parents' feelings and opinions by re stating what you have understood them to say.

Trust parents' abilities to find solutions to problems. Productive parent/caregiver communication is always in the best interest of the children. It never happens by accident, however. It takes thoughtful planning and attention.

Resource Listing

The following selected resources are suggested as basic tools for building quality out of school programs for school-age children. (A number of the books are available through the Resource Catalog of School-Age NOTES. The listing "SAN" follows the listing of items which can be ordered through School-Age NOTES, PO Box 40205, Nashville, TN 37204. Telephone: 615-242-8464. Many other resources are also available through this catalog.)

The Activities Club Theme Guides (1994) Joan M. Bergstrom. Belmont, Massachusetts: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc. Includes separate guides on how to organize 14 different clubs with school-age children. Supplementary Theme Kits and Activity Boxes also available. (Contact: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc. 30 Church Street, Suite 210, Belmont, MA 02178. Telephone: 800-873-5487.

Activities for School-Age Child Care. (1977) Rosalie Blau, Elizabeth Brady, Ida Bucher, Betsy Hiteshew, Ann Zavitkovsky, Docia Zavitkovsky. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

All the Best Contests for Kids, 4th Edition. (1994) Joan M. Bergstrom and Craig Bergstrom. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press. (May be purchased from: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc., 30 Church St., Suite 210, Belmont, MA 02178. Telephone: 800-873-5487.)

Creative Conflict Resolution: More Than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom. (1984) William J. Kriedler. Glenview Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company. SAN

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs, Second Edition. (1993) Kay Albrecht and Margaret Plantz. Alexandria, Virginia: Project Home Safe, American Home Economics Association. (Contact: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004-1840. Telephone: 800-228-0810.

Half a Childhood: Time for School-Age Child Care (1984) Judith Bender, Barbara Schuyler-Haas Elder, Charles H. Flatter. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

The Kids Can Help Book: Lend a Hand, Volunteer, Share a Skill, Make a Difference. (1992) Suzanne M. Logan. New York, New York: Cloverdale Press, Inc.

Kids Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors (1990) Linda G. Sisson. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

The New Youth Challenge: A Model for Working with Older CHildren in School-Age Child Care (1988) Steve Musson and Maurice Gibbons. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond, Second Edition. (1993) Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson. Westport, Connecticut: Auburn House. SAN

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs. (1990) Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

School-Age NOTES: The Newsletter for School-Age Professionals. (Contact: School-Age NOTES, PO Box 40105, Nashville, TN 37204. Telephone: 615-242-8464)

School's Out! Resources for Your Child's Time, Afternoons, Weekends, Vacations. (1990) Joan M. Bergstrom. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Pres. SAN

Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care. (1993) Alexandria, Virginia: National Association of Elementary School Principals. (Contact: NAESP, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 23314. Telephone: 703-684-3345.

The Survival Guide to School-Age Child Care (1988) Betsy Arns. Huntington Beach, California: School-Age Workshops Press. SAN